

THE LIVING AGE.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
1. The Woman I Loved—Third and Last Part, <i>Once a Week,</i>	258
2. Concerning Atmospheres and Currents; by A.K.H.B. <i>Good Words,</i>	278
3. A Non-Combatant Hero—Baron Larrey, <i>Chambers's Journal,</i>	288
4. The Duel of The Ironsides, <i>Spectator,</i>	293
5. Battle of Newport News, <i>Saturday Review,</i>	295
6. Fashions—Crinoline, Photographs, " "	298
7. Science and Arts for February, <i>Chambers's Journal,</i>	302

POETRY.—A Soldier's Letter, and a Woman's Answer, 287. Monosyllabics, 287.

SHORT ARTICLES.—History of American Manufactures, 277. Coins in Tankards, 277. Justinus Kenner, 286. Bets on the Comet, 292. Sunday Papers in Church at New Orleans, 292. Propriety, 297. Reading, 297. Statue of Alexander Wilson, the American Ornithologist, 297. Elwyn's edition of Pope, 297. Rare Autographs, 301. A New Furnace for Boilers, 301. Toy Books, 301. Unsuccessful Prize Poems, 304. Mr. Edward Dicey on the United States, 304.

NEW BOOKS.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning Mannering and I set off directly after breakfast. Lascelles made an effort to join us, but we told him it was unnecessary, and that we felt that with a house full of young ladies, it was very selfish to occupy with sordid political cares the "likeliest man among us."

I do not think he was much disappointed. He wished to keep honestly to his bargain to work for the future member, but was not sorry to be off duty sometimes. As we galloped along, we saw, to our astonishment, Maynard, his wife, and Fanny, riding in the same direction. Mannering immediately put his horse beside Fanny's, and I joined Maynard and his wife.

"After I wrote to you," said Maynard, "I found we were all in the humor to ride towards the Combe this morning; and, not knowing whether my proposition to you would suit your other engagements, I resolved to strike while the iron was hot. Our combined forces will be quite a demonstration."

Nothing could be more cordial than Maynard. He talked to me of Italy, of Austria, of Paris, and I found him a man of great general information and of artistic as well as scholarly tastes. Nora never looked so well as on horseback, and was less reserved with me than usual. I heard Fanny behind us laughing at some of Mannering's sallies, and we all were in the mood for mirth and enjoyment, at least ostensibly.

I was resolved that none should guess what I felt on some subjects. Besides, I grasped at this new toy, this fresh ambition, with something of the feverish tenacity of a drowning man grasping at some straw for bare life. When we entered the farmhouse which was our destination, I recognized, to my surprise, in the wife of the farmer, an old house-keeper of my mother's. She was at Speynings when I left it to go to Vienna, and had nursed my mother in her last illness. Her face lighted up with pleasure as she recognized Fanny and Nora, and they all disappeared together while we went to the kitchen.

The farmer was a surly kind of man. He was disposed to be disputatious, too; one of those men who had a fuddled kind of notion over his pipes and beer, that but for the watchfulness of such as he, England would be the prey of a "bloated aristocracy."

But like many others of his type, it was curious to see how all his opinions had been originated by his wife, and were held in deference to her. "My good dame" was quoted perpetually, and with the respect due to an oracle.

We should have found it difficult, I suspect, to do much with him, as all his professions of faith were diametrically opposite to ours, when his wife and the two ladies returned.

She had evidently been far more easy to influence, or had been better managed, for she walked straight up to her husband, and (by a series of nudges, and whispers, and contradictions, flatly interrupting him when he attempted an expostulation; and, twisting his words till he remained open-mouthed at their new meanings) completely upset his whole line of argument, and made him believe he was pledged to ours. It was very curious to look at them. This small, spare, peaky woman, whom he could have crushed between finger and thumb, evidently ruled most mercilessly the great, brawny demagogue. I was no longer surprised at his confused notions—these sudden whirls of change must have kept up a chronic state of up-side-down in his brain.

When we left, I went up to her and asked her how she was, and told her I had recognized her. She instantly became radiant, and dropped a low curtesy. I asked her why she never came to see the old place?

She looked rather primly at Fanny.

"I shall be very glad if you would come," I added, "you and Speynings ought not to be such strangers."

She looked puzzled, and muttered something I did not hear.

When in the saddle again, we divided as we had done before, only that Nora, after a time, cantered on with Mannering and Fanny.

Maynard and I dropped behind, and in the intervals of our calls on other voters, we went on with a discussion we had commenced, and a theory he was expounding about the allegory contained in the Sacred and Profane Love of Titian.

I was much interested, for, to say truth, speculations of this kind were much more congenial to me than the business I was at present engaged in. Maynard was pleased, as we all are, when we get on a hobby and

have met with sympathy. We were so absorbed that we did not notice the gathering clouds in the sky, and the large drops which fell, and the distant rumbling of thunder roused us as from a dream.

We were now all gathered together, our horses' heads side by side, as in such a predicament people always do, and then we hastened on, purposing to leave the Maynards at the rectory, and to proceed ourselves.

By the time, however, we did arrive at the rectory, the rain was falling in such torrents that the hospitable Maynards would not hear of our going further. We must wait till the storm was over.

Meanwhile we must dine with him. He seemed so bent upon it, that, after some little hesitation, we consented.

We caught that amphibious animal, the postman, who fortunately left the letters at the rectory before he went on to the Hall, and sent a message by him that we were detained, and that they must not wait for us for dinner.

We dried ourselves as best we might, and while Mannering went to the dressing-room to array himself in some of Maynard's garments, the rector and I continued our conversation in his study.

I took an opportunity, however, of giving him the little packet for Fanny, and asked him to give it her, and tell her what it was. We were interrupted just as he seemed about asking me some question, relative, I thought, to Fanny's estrangement from her dearest friend's son, and I was too glad to escape giving him an answer.

I went into the drawing-room, but listened for a moment to hear if Mannering was there. I felt a reluctance to enter, if Fanny and Nora were alone, when, with the proverbial good luck of listeners, I caught the following words spoken by Fanny. Her raised voice was the sign of emotion.

"It is quite from a different cause, Nora, I assure you; nothing can alter the dislike and contempt I feel for *him*; but I helped him for his mother's sake."

"Here, Spencer," called out Mannering, "come here, and try and make yourself presentable. I am rather proud of my success."

We did not meet till dinner, and then I saw that Maynard must have given the

packet to Fanny, for her eyes looked as if she had been crying, and her face had lost the set and resolute look it usually wore when I was present. Once during dinner, Mannering said,

"I cannot tell you, Spencer, how glad I am that you take so kindly to these electioneering struggles. I never thought it was *in* you, with your half-foreign education and long residence abroad. What pleasure it would have given my dear friend, your mother, could she have lived to see her son the member for G——. She had the clearest brains, and the strongest wish to use brains, time, influence, heart, for others, of any woman, or man, I may add, that I ever knew."

It was fortunate that Mannering's speech was long. Involuntarily I raised my eyes, and met those of Fanny, who sat opposite to me. She blushed painfully. I felt I turned livid.

After dinner there was music. Maynard was obliged to leave us. Nora and Fanny played and sang to Mannering, who said he wanted to get the Lascellian music out of his head. They asked him what he meant, but he refused to gratify them, and only said that it was distasteful to him.

I leant my elbow on the mantel-piece, and stood in deep, sad thought. How everywhere I turned I evoked some memory, or recalled some association which was painful. By this deep, deep pain, which every moment was sinking deeper and deeper into my heart, was I paying all those long arrears of heartless indifference and of selfish neglect. It seemed to me that those words of Mannering's blighted all the desire that I had for success in this new object of effort.

While I thus stood quite absorbed and deaf to what was going on around me, Fanny came to me. Her sister was singing to Mannering, who was quite enchanted with her voice, and she had left them.

"I come to thank you for your kindness," she said.

"I do not deserve your thanks."

"For this remembrance of my dearest."

She stopped, and I saw the tears in her eyes.

"It's no act of mine—she had written your name on it—"

"Was it not with the others—"

"No. I found it in a desk which I had

not yet opened. I was glad to find that she had destined it where I myself should have wished, but not dared to offer it."

"Thank you. It is so identified with her (you know she always wore it) that it is very dear and precious to me."

"And no one ought or should have had it but you, whom she loved so dearly, and who so loved her."

Fanny looked at me with something of a puzzled, inquiring air. There are tones which betray so much more than the words. Did mine betray some of my unavailing repentance?

I controlled myself, however; and as she was turning away said to her,

"When I first returned from abroad, Maynard told me of certain charities which she had wished to initiate. At the time I neglected them, but now, if it were possible, I should like to fulfil those wishes of hers. Not to make myself popular, Miss Egerton," I said, for there was something in the half-surprise, half-doubt of her look, which stung me, "I could not attend to them till after the election has been decided; but then—"

"I beg your pardon: again let me thank you for this unexpected kindness."

"Again: why should it be unexpected, Miss Egerton; could I have possibly done otherwise?"

"The brilliants are so valuable; and, indeed, at first I thought they had formed part of the set which I sent; I thought you would not have separated them."

"It was, perhaps, natural for you to think so," I answered, wearily, for I was thoroughly humbled and dispirited; "one is too apt to forget how low a place one holds in the opinion of some persons, and still more that we ourselves only are to blame for it."

Fanny looked at me with something of the steadfast intentness which had so often struck me in my mother's looks. It was not surprising that she had acquired a resemblance to her. She turned from me and rejoined her friend, and I did not speak to her again.

We left about ten o'clock, but on reaching Speynings I left Mannering to find his way to the drawing-room alone, and turned into the library.

I was ashamed of the momentary impulse which had exposed me to unnecessary humiliation. I was indignant also at the weak-

ness, for there seemed to me to be a base desire of ingratiating myself with one who despised me, mingled with an honest wish to carry out the too-long neglected intentions of my mother.

"Let her despise me," I thought; "she cannot equal my own contempt for myself."

How I now longed for defeat in this present ambition of mine, which had been spoiled by Mannering's words of all its gilded promise. I had sought this escape from disappointment and satiety; and it was a miserable thought that, if successful, I should be congratulated on all sides as doing what had been most desired by one whose wishes during her life had never been studied by me. There are moments in life when a large and complete misfortune would be welcome; it would square the external circumstances with the utter despair of the inner being.

"My dear Hubert," said Marian, as she entered, "what are you doing here by yourself? Mr. Mannering has been giving us the most glorious accounts of your day; but I must say, looking at you, that you do not bear him out—you look bored to the last extent. What is the matter?"

"I am tired—but I was coming up."

"You need not, for they are almost all gone to bed; I came down only to see you."

"Who are left?"

"Only one or two—"

"Lord Lascelles?"

"Yes;—why? Did you want to speak to him?"

"No."

There was a pause, and our eyes met. I turned away mine first. In hers was something of that stern, dominant, overbearing expression, with which it is said a sane person can control an insane one, or a human being master an animal. It was but a moment—but it was there.

"Good-night, then; don't sit up all night."

And I heard the rustle of her soft satin dress along the passages. She did not return to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VIII.

It seemed that my evil wishes had called down their own accomplishment, for the next day news was brought us that a neighboring gentleman, representing the same opinions as my own, was going to offer himself to the electors. My friends held a meeting, and,

much to their mortification, I somewhat abruptly declared that I would not divide the votes on our side, and that I would not be put in nomination.

Mannerling held up his hands at such Quixotic generosity, others were almost angry, but I was firm. I was accused of idleness, of caprice; Lascelles was especially indignant, and my wife seemed much disappointed, but I was not to be moved.

I saw that Marian watched me closely at this time. She scrutinized my words, and tried to read my looks. She could not understand me. Whatever she might say, she felt secure of her power over me; she would not have believed that it was over, had any one insinuated such a thing, and yet I was evidently changed. She redoubled her airy fascinations, and all but two persons would have considered her a model of a devoted and loving wife. These two persons were Lascelles and myself. Lascelles considered her as an angelic, mismatched being, who strove to do her duty to an unsympathizing, capricious brute of a husband who did not care a straw for her, and who did not understand all the exquisite refinement and poetry of her nature, and who could not therefore be loved by her; and I—I read her as one reads a book, and no mere lip-service would avail with me. Once or twice I saw she thought she had detected jealousy, and she was rejoiced. *That* could be controlled to her own purposes. Most of our friends had now left, and at last Lascelles found he had no excuse to linger, and took his departure. Mannerling (who was to stay till the next day), Marian, and I, stood in the porch to see the last of the last detachment of our guests. Among these was Lascelles.

"So ends our pleasant time," said Marian, with a sigh.

"Yes, we have had a delightful visit," said Mannerling; "what a pity it is over! But Spencer owes himself to the county, and the next time he shall not be allowed to slip through our fingers."

"Yes, most wives, I believe, feel, or affect to feel, a kind of jealousy of their husband's parliamentary duties; but I think Hubert would make a good member. He has both energy and persistence when roused, and he wants rousing—"

"He looks rather relieved, however, now, whether at being left at last alone with you,

Mrs. Spencer, or at the absence of some of us, I cannot define. You really seemed glad to shake hands with that handsome fellow Lascelles, Spencer; wasn't it a fact now?"

"Very glad," I answered; "I do not wish to have Lascelles here again."

"Do you mean, Hubert, that you did not like a person who was devoted to you as Lord Lascelles was? I appeal to you, Mr. Mannerling: could any one have worked harder than Lord Lascelles in Hubert's cause?—how very ungrateful men are—"

"To each other?—Yes, I am afraid so; but between ourselves, Mrs. Spencer, Hubert did not like the Lascellian muse, or music."

We all laughed, but I detected Marian's eyes exploring my face with keen and inquiring scrutiny. The next day we were left alone.

It is an old proverb that says, "Murder will out," that stones will not hide, the heavens will not cover it, the reeds will speak, the walls will whisper it, but even truer is it of love. We *cannot* conceal its life, we must betray its death. And yet I can honestly say that I endeavored to appear the same. Never since I had been married had I so sincerely tried to make Marian happy. No, it should not be my fault if she were not so. I did not dare to be capricious, self-absorbed, negligent; for the first time in my life I tried to rule myself. The ice was cracking so fast under my feet that one unguarded movement would plunge me into the depths below. I must needs be wary. I had never striven so hard in all outward acts to follow the old precept, "preferring another to one's self," and my success was—null.

Marian saw through it, and tried me hard. I could be gentle, attentive, kind; but how impossible to simulate the feeling which had once been the motive power of my being I cannot describe. A garden which had once been a paradise of choice and fragrant flowers, transformed by some elemental convulsion into a yawning chasm, was not more different from the state of my heart then and now. And she?—how inexplicable are women! I was convinced that she did not love me, that she could not love any one; that her whole nature had been unnaturally forced in one direction to the serious detriment and impoverishment of all others; that

that insatiable love of pleasing which of all passions leaves most sterile the moral nature had been like a leprosy eating into her very soul, and yet how clearly I saw that she was striving to regain her power over me—but from what motive I could not define. She made use of her beauty, more dazzling in some respects at this period than I had ever seen it, as men use a falchion to cut down an enemy; she tried to rouse that she might sway those base instincts in me which had always been so submissive to her; she was Protean in the changes she assumed; tender, sportive, impulsive, gay, melancholy by turns, and wore her softest semblance to soothe, or her most *piquante* grace to excite, the passion, which she hoped yet existed, however palsied and wounded it had been. She must have had a deep reliance on my weakness. There were times, I confess, when a sort of diseased simulacrum of former unholy fires, a galvanic appearance of vitality in the seared corpse of what had once been passion would be awakened; but there were moments of revulsion when my whole man rose against her fascinations and revolted from her charms, and I hated her. I acknowledged to myself it was hatred. But these were only intervals; the greater part of the time I was internally in a state of stagnant apathy, while externally I tried to do my best, so to indulge her wishes and yield to her desires, that she should not have reason to complain of me, or to give herself the excuse of an unhappy home or an uncomplying husband to act the part of victim or martyr.

These were certainly the ghastliest and dreariest days of my life. Not a friendly star beamed upon me from any quarter. There was a mute duel *à l'outrance* between my wife and myself, and there was no chance of peace or of victory. I held no divining rod by which I could have discovered the life-springs of Marian's nature. Mine was not love, it was passion, and passion has no power to exalt or redeem.

Lascelles' name had never been mentioned between us since the day he left. Marian might have thought he had dropt out of my remembrance, but for one fact. I knew he was in the neighborhood, and we sometimes received invitations from the persons with whom he was staying, but these I invariably declined.

Marian never remonstrated, or noticed these refusals. She bided her time, and knew her man. He was subjugated thoroughly, and given but an opportunity, and he would be at her feet again. Her tactics at this time inclined her rather to resume the influence she felt she had lost over me. It mortified her, I know, to the quick to feel how completely she had lost, not, I dare swear, my affection, but that mystic and sensuous passion which had once made my whole being vibrate at her touch, her look, the turn of her head. Her mirror must have told her she had never been more lovely in certain respects than now; but she felt that the hind or the ploughboy who turned to stare at her when they met her appreciated her more than I did. Except in the courtesies to which I was scrupulous to adhere, she had lost the very *prestige* of her sex.

If she was mortified I was wretched. I had compassed my desires and this was the end. But I must bear it, and make the best of it. Perhaps the schooling I now underwent was of use to me: it was a bitter but bracing tonic.

I never refused a wish of hers, and she sometimes seemed to defy me, so wild were her caprices, but nothing was withheld that could be obtained. I also tried to interest her in some of my own pursuits. Maynard often came to us now; Nora more seldom, for she never appeared to advantage in her sister's presence; but Maynard was pleased to renew our art-discussions; and then I had followed up the intentions I had avowed to Fanny, and had worked hard to institute those charities, and develop those improvements which had been so dear to my mother.

Fanny I had not seen again, but I felt that both she and Nora assisted me indirectly in the parish: I traced their work everywhere, not only in the actual schools and workhouses, but in the change with which I was everywhere received among my poorer neighbors.

Though Marian had always been liberal-handed and good-natured, the shrewd villagers had long taken measure of her moral stature, and by some mysterious process of village chattering it had been known that "Madam Spencer," as they called my mother, had not wished her to be her son's wife. That son, too, was more like a "furriner than an Englishman, and had never lived in the old place till he could not help himself." I would

match a real country cottager for pride and reserve, and a power of repelling, with any aristocrat in the world, and I had never felt the least at home with any one of them. But now the case was different, and with Maynard, or without him, I was welcome. At first Marian accompanied me; but when she saw I attended more to the persons I went to see than to her, that it was the actual donations, and not the grace with which they were offered that interested me, she desisted, and I went alone.

At last, I fancy, she not only became bored with this kind of life, but began to reflect seriously on the future. Life to Marian was admiration, homage, adoration; how should she exist without it? And what was worse to know that it was hers elsewhere, but that she was deprived of it? Her thoughts must often have reverted to Lascelles at this period. I think she must have reflected long, and counted the cost often before she finally made up her plan to break through our armed peace. I observed that after a certain period she left off her lively sallies, and especially when Maynard was present, she adopted a spiritless, languid demeanor, which told of failing health or sinking spirits. At first I was deceived, and offered to take her away for change of air, but she declined it.

At last, one day, after Maynard and Nora also had dined with us, and she and Nora having left the dining-room early had had an opportunity for a long conversation, I observed on joining them that Nora looked as if she had been much vexed, and that Marian bore the air of a person who has discovered a secret. When they were gone she called to me:

"Hubert, I wish to speak to you for a moment. Why does Miss Egerton never accompany Nora here—to her old home?"

I was dumb with astonishment.

"Will you tell me?" she asked again, lifting her large eyes to mine.

"How can I?" I stammered out.

"I have long observed an estrangement between you, so strange and unnatural it seemed to me at first, when I remember you were like brother and sister; but I was so happy then" (she sighed faintly), "that I was perhaps unmindful of others—but now I can detect a good deal to which I was then blind."

"Are you not happy now?"

"Do not speak of me—I want your answer."

"What answer can I give?"

"Am I the cause?"

I was silent.

"Were you unfaithful to her on my account? Does she hate me because she loved you?"

Her voice was like music.

"Good heavens! what do you mean?"

"I asked Nora; but as usual Nora is so childishly violent—"

"Marian, what mischief inspires you?"

"Poor Miss Egerton," said Marian, crossing her feet languidly and leaning back, "she might not find my position so enviable after all. I think if a woman has been disappointed, the best cure for her would be to see, by some magic, into the heart of the man who has caused her sorrow, and of the woman who has supplanted her, when two years of their married life are over."

"I am sorry, if I understand you rightly, as regards ourselves, Marian; but it is my duty to tell you how entirely false is your first supposition. There is nothing Miss Egerton would consider as such an insult."

My voice was bitter and my cheek was flushed. I could picture to myself how Fanny would look at such an imputation. The scorn, the indignation in her eyes. Marian looked at me steadily.

"I may be right after all; but, however, it is no use to discuss the point—the evil is not to be remedied. I cannot oblige her or any one else by doing what would be *de rigueur*, in a French novel, sublimely sacrificing myself, à la Jacques,—it's a pity, I confess."

She shook her head, and again suddenly raised her eyes to mine.

"If you only knew how absurdly you speak," I said, trying to master my passion, "you, who have so much fine intuition, would cease; but remember this, I will not listen to such insinuations, and I forbid you—yes, I forbid you to repeat them. Believe me, Marian," I said, with a desperate revulsion of heart, "if you do not love me, no one else can or will—or has."

Her lips curled as in scorn, but before she had time to speak I left the room.

The thought that Nora should repeat to Fanny what Marian had said, was misery to me. It was a gratuitous insult to Fanny;

and though I could have laughed at the folly of such an idea, it did not the less grate on me that it would surely evoke some very marked expression of dislike from Fanny. If she had felt the least inclined to soften her opinion of me, and to manifest my mother's forgiveness by her own, this would harden her at once.

The fruit of it was seen by Maynard's constant refusal, after this time, to come to us. I often met him, and he called on me, but the intimacy that had sprung up between us was nipped in all its hospitable demonstrations. For the rest, our entire agreement upon matters connected with Speynings, and those still more congenial subjects we had so often discussed, kept up our friendship—for it had become a friendship. I think he saw I was a very unhappy person, and as far as was in his power tried to support and console me.

But I was to drink still deeper of the poison distilled from my own follies and errors.

We never renewed this conversation; but I saw that it was Marian's fixed resolve to appear as if she had detected me in some infidelity. She was melancholy and silent when we were together, and remained alone as much as possible. She drove out with Nina, however, every day, and I am quite sure that wherever she went she must have left the impression of being an unhappy wife.

One tangible accusation can be proved false, but a general leaven of suspicion is invincible. So very beautiful a woman, surrounded with every advantage of position and fortune, could not appear, as she did, a prey to the most profound melancholy, without exciting attention, and that the secret canker must be some vice in the husband was the inevitable conclusion at which persons arrived.

I was not aware of the extent of this till afterwards. I saw that she refused all invitations, and with the exception of drives and morning calls rarely left the house but when I was obliged, as I sometimes was, to go to some dinner-party alone, I could see by the inquiries with which I was assailed by some of the ladies, and some after-dinner jests of the men, that I was not very highly esteemed in my conjugal character.

All weak men have a desire to fly from present difficulties by change of place, and I in longed to put a world between us; but

I conquered the wish. I would remain at my post. I had involved myself in many matters of business which required my personal attention, and besides my clear duty was not to leave Marian. I could now listen to the voice of duty and obey it, *quand même*.

The only person who, I think, saw the real state of the case was Maynard. A single-minded man of his sort could not, of course, fathom a character like Marian's, but he could see I was tried to the utmost by what he thought was only "fine lady caprice," but which was not the less trying to bear. He saw also that I was patient and anxious to please—one who would not be pleased.

I rarely saw the ladies when I went to see him; the announcement of Mr. Spencer was enough to send them out of the room if they were there. Once, however, while I was sitting there Nora came in.

"I beg your pardon, do not let me disturb you," she said. "But what is the matter?" she added with almost a start; "are you not well?"

"Quite well, thank you."

Maynard looked at me through his glasses.

"Nonsense, Spencer, you cannot be well with such a face as that. I had not noticed it before."

Nora certainly looked at me with surprise. She evidently had been shocked; and I felt for the first time what a haggard, hopeless-looking wretch I must have appeared.

A few days afterwards, as I was returning from the rectory, I met Nora and Fanny. They did not pass me as usual with a hasty word and salute, but relaxed their steps as I came up to them.

Fanny's veil had been thrown back, though she drew it over her face as I approached. Something in her wistful and compassionate glance sent my thoughts back to a very distant date. I remembered the day when I met the two girls, and heard for the first time that Marian was betrothed to Warburton.

I remembered how Fanny had then put out her hand as if she would, in her girlish affection and kindness, have helped me to bear the blow under which I was staggering.

Then and now! Alas, a gulf divided me from that time, and yet, by the strange repetition of almost identical circumstances which one so often finds in one's fate, I stood perhaps in the same need as then; but now, no

hand would or could be held out to me. I had placed myself where I was hemmed in by sorrow, yet cut off from sympathy.

Both men and women, if they have drawn a blank in the lottery of marriage, must bear the penalty alone. Feebly striking out the hands for aid in that conflict is worse than idle.

These thoughts were filling my mind as I paused near these two.

"Are you better?" asked Nora.

"Thank you. I cannot acknowledge that I have been ill."

"You must not say that, when you look as you do. And Marian, too, seems as if a change of air would do her good."

"Have you seen her?" I asked with surprise, for I had left Marian complaining of cold, in her dressing-room.

Nora turned scarlet.

"Yes, I saw her—I met her—just now, walking with Lord Lascelles."

I felt that I changed color.

"We are late," interrupted Fanny; "good-morning."

But though they hurried on, I distinguished through Fanny's veil the sad, mournful expression which I had noticed before. On reaching home I heard that Marian was still out.

She returned, however, soon afterwards, and came to me all blooming and animated in her velvet and furs with Nina, a charming little rosebud, by her side.

"I fancied a walk would dispel my fit of the blues," she said, "after you left, and I thought you would be sure to overtake us, for I had only just parted from Nora when you came up to her. I saw you as we looked back."

"Nora told me she had seen you."

She looked at me keenly for a minute.

"By the by, here is Lord Lascelles' card, I find he has been here, for it was with some others and these letters in the hall. I wondered when we met him where he had been, for I know what a *bête noir* he is of yours, and thought how disagreeable his visit would be to you. He had just joined us when we met Nora."

What perfectly acted smiling indifference.

"You are quite right. I do not like him, and I shall not receive him if he repeats his visit."

"I differ entirely from you," she said, with

equal coolness. "I like him—he was one of my friends in Vienna, and to me he will always be welcome. I have never been accustomed to give up my friends to satisfy the caprice—or jealousy—of any one."

"Jealousy!"

"I may flatter myself in using that word. Let me say caprice, then." She paused. "You know I never quarrelled with any one in my life, therefore, Hubert, you will not surely oblige me to do so with you."

"There is no necessity for discussion," I said, "but in this case my will must rule yours."

"Have you any reason for disliking that poor young man, except that—"

"What!"

"He likes me with that friendly and cordial regard which our old acquaintance and my seniority so entirely authorize."

Her eyes sparkled with a dangerous lustre as she said this.

"It is no use, Marian," I said; "while I am master of this house Lascelles does not enter it."

"Do you understand how ridiculous you make yourself?"

"To that I am indifferent."

"Then this is your deliberate conclusion?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Come, Nina," she called to the child, "we must not disturb papa any longer; let us go up-stairs."

The child ran in from the terrace where she had been playing during our colloquy, and I was left alone.

If I expected that Marian would show any temper after this dialogue I was mistaken. She was languid, melancholy, indolent, but as soft and gentle as usual.

The little asperities and inequalities which I had noticed in her before the period of the election had passed away. I suppose the fact was, she no longer felt dull; she had plans to develop and a plot to arrange.

I seldom saw her but at meals, and then our conversation was brief and reserved. Poor little Nina, who was very fond of her "papa," as she had called me from the first, would sometimes run into the library and climb on my knee and try to make me smile, or flit about the room opening my portfolios and books; and calling out her childish remarks and comments, would beguile a sad

and solitary hour, till her *bonne*, or sometimes Marian herself, would call her from the window for her morning walk on the terrace.

It was a miserable time; the waning year added a melancholy of its own to my own cheerless existence. It was one of those strange, moist, unhealthy, warm Novembers which are so peculiarly exhausting and yet irritating to the nerves. Everything seemed surcharged with gloom. Gloom present and gloom expectant. A hushed and solemn awe pervaded Nature, a foreboding of evil from the elemental conflict of winter, and a preparation of the forces which were to be at first resistant and then victorious. Meanwhile the trees were stripped and black; the landscape was scarcely discernable through thin sheets of white mist; the sky was heavy with the amassed though unshed rain, and the warm steaming air saturated the earth with a penetrating and heavy vapor.

I went on my usual routine, but day by day I felt myself sinking. I dreaded illness, I dreaded fever, I dreaded delirium, which might betray my utter wretchedness. It would seem to many weak and unmanly to be so mentally and physically unstrung by what may appear an inadequate cause. I was conscious of this, and struggled with might and main to keep my footing, but it must be remembered that the failure with me was total, and deservedly so. I had more superstitious and feeble fibres in my nature than belong to many men, and the justice and fitness of suffering thus, in this spot where I had caused so much suffering, gave me pain—additional to the actual pain itself—that I had never been loved by Marian, and that I loved her no more.

One morning, as I was sitting writing, Nina came in as usual, and after a little talk with her, I deposited her by the glass door of the terrace on the ground, with one of my old sketch-books, while I finished some letters.

I heard her chattering very volubly to herself, and then exclaim with delight—"Mamma! mamma!"

I turned and saw her looking at some drawing in the book. I rose in surprise to see what it was, when, on taking the book from her hand, I recognized an old sketch I had made at Venice of Veronica. I stood with my back to the window still looking at

it with a rush of bitter memories, till heard I hear say: "Look, mamma! I found you in papa's book."

Marian had come to fetch her. She smiled, in a very Sphinx-like manner, as she held out her hand for the book.

"It isn't your mamma," I said, and was closing the book, but she persisted and took it from me.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"No one you know—a Venetian." I hesitated.

"Say no more. I was very indiscreet. A husband can take his wife's life and examine it through and through—backwards and forwards; tear up a leaf here—cut out a part there; but to a wife, a husband's life is sealed; she must be ignorant of the past—she must shut her eyes to the present, and she must not dream of inquiring into the future. I am learning my duty. Come, Nina, you have plagued papa quite enough for one morning, come."

She stepped back as she spoke, and as the wan November sun lit her face there was a menace in her eyes which made her for a minute the image of Veronica as she stood by the lagoon on that last fatal evening.

CHAPTER IX.

THE next morning I (or rather Marian) received a letter from some very old friends of the Comptons, Mr. and Mrs. Talbot, inviting us to spend Christmas with them. I knew I could not leave Speynings myself at this time, but Marian, after she had read the letter, passed it across to me, and said:

"There is no reason why we should refuse this, is there?"

"I cannot leave Speynings at Christmas."

"But I can, I suppose. They have invited Harry for his holidays, and I think the change will do us all good. Speynings seems very unhealthy just now."

"Just as you like," I said, wearily.

"But you—"

"I must join you later."

I knew little of these Talbots personally, but that they were very old friends of hers. Their house was one of the gayest in the neighboring county. A baronial mansion in which the old Christmas traditions were kept up in the most rigorous manner. Marian had not seen them for years, and it

seemed for a moment strange that they should so suddenly have remembered her, but it was only a fleeting thought. I did not pause to consider the why or wherefore, but was glad of any break which would in a measure modify the situation in which we were.

It was about three weeks before Christmas, and the interval was occupied by Marian in making the most elaborate preparations for her visit.

Maynard informed me that Nora and Fanny also had been invited, but that they did not intend going till after the Christmas week. I felt glad to hear they would be there so soon after Marian, though I should have been puzzled to explain why I was glad.

During this time no allusion was made by either of us to any subject which had been the cause of discussion between us.

There was a melancholy stillness as in a house hushed by the presence of a corpse.

Nina flew about from room to room with most fabulous accounts of the glories of newly-arrived dresses; but to have judged from her mother's own manner, she was fulfilling an unpleasant but unavoidable duty.

I heard her tell Maynard that she was not at all in the mood to pay a gay visit; but that the autumn had been so unhealthy, she was glad to remove Nina from Speynings, and not to bring Harry to it.

"One's children must be the first consideration always." I overheard her say this. It was a phrase I had heard before, and I smiled bitterly at the remembrance. They went. I put her into the carriage, carefully arranged her dress and cloaks, and went round to the other side to see that all was as it should be.

"Good-by, Hubert."

Her eyes rested on mine for a moment. Her glance was steady and searching, and with something of triumph in it—something of farewell was mingled with it also. Certainly, if there had been contest between us, she looked the victor as she leant back, luxuriously folded up in her warm cloaks and furs, with her beautiful face slightly flushed, from some emotion I could not define, and her brilliant smile as she looked back at me where I stood—a pale, grave man, with the marks of disappointment and wasting sorrow on both face and figure.

I confess it was with a sense of defeat that I went into the house again. I had given her the power of marring my life, and what was I in hers? I could prevent her receiving the homage of a fool, but was she the more mine for that prevention? Warburton's good nature had saved him from actively opposing her, and he had received his reward in her apparent deference and docility to him. She was quite ready to deceive any one willing to be deceived, for I knew her nature was antagonistic to all rough and rude methods; but with me it was impossible to act so, and if in her heart she despised me the less, I am confident that no one had ever excited so much of genuine dislike in her, as I had during these last months. I had found her out, I had resisted her, and I was not to be subdued. Such were the thoughts with which I sat in my home. But to say the truth, there was a sense of relief also. The tension caused by the desire of keeping up appearances was over. I could look as I felt—a thoroughly miserable and hopeless man.

I avoided the Rectory till the two ladies had departed; they were to precede Maynard by a few days, but after they left he and I were much together. He was singularly kind to me. On one subject (Marian) my lips were sealed, but on all others we talked openly. He probed me deeply, and ascertained I think, that my nature was perverted, but not utterly bad. Education, over-indulgence, had done great harm, an evil love had done more; but cut down now to the very roots, as all was, a growth of better things might be expected.

CHAPTER X.

I HAD had a few lines from Marian, announcing her safe arrival. Very cold and very brief was the note; I had answered it, and that was all.

One evening as I sat with Maynard, he received a letter from Nora. Devoted husband as he was, he made an apology, and opened it immediately.

His countenance changed a little as he read it, and I saw him suddenly put it down and look at me.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing—have you heard from Mrs. Spencer?"

"Not the last few days—I may have a letter this evening."

"Are you going to the Talbots'?"

"Not till I fetch Marian away—they are not friends of mine, you know."

"Nora is very anxious that I should go there to-morrow: there is to be a very crowded ball. Why don't you come with me?"

His voice was eager.

"Why should I go? Tell me, Maynard; what is it? There is something I should know."

"I never could manage anything in my life," said Maynard, bluntly: "you had better read this."

He separated the first sheet—containing, I suppose, some wife-like greetings—from the others, and put the rest into my hands, while he went to give orders for his departure on the morrow.

These were the words of the letter:—

"I told you how surprised I was that the Talbots should have remembered us after so many years; but I discovered accidentally that Marian had written to them some weeks ago, and had so deplored the unhealthiness of the air of Speynings, and her dislike to bringing Harry into it from Harrow, that Mrs. Talbot considered herself bound to invite Harry, and then arranged to have the whole party. Mrs. Talbot considers Harry Villiers something in the light of an heir. She told me all this as we were walking one day. How like Marian! I suppose she felt moped at Speynings. No one, it is true, can have altered so much in health and spirits as Mr. Spencer these last few months. Marian never looked better, but complains of her chest, and talks of going to Italy for her health in the spring. So does Lord Lascelles, who has been staying here a long time. The Talbots are distant relations of his. He looks at Marian as if she were something divine, but she does not distinguish him in any way. Fanny says Mr. Spencer ought to be here (the 'ought' was dashed). Marian is very kind to me, but I never can get on with her somehow. She treats Fanny in a most strange way, as if she were very sorry for her, or as if she felt she had injured her. I do not understand it, nor does Fan, but it makes her savage. I am glad for her sake that when we return she must fulfil her old promise of spending six months with her uncle in Scotland. Marian seems trying to fasten some imputation on her. Nobody could ever explain Marian's whims, and this is one I suppose;

but I confess I wish Mr. Spencer were here, for there are many disagreeable things said of him, as if he neglected her, and was behaving very ill."

I smiled when I put down this letter. I understood Marian—not entirely as I found afterwards, but better than poor simple Nora. It was requisite that I should go for my own honor, not as regarded Lascelles, but as to my own character as a husband, I could also save Fanny from the imputation which I saw would be dexterously fastened on her of being Marian's rival.

"Do not mention me, Maynard," I said, "in your answer, but I will accompany you. How soon can we get there?"

"We shall catch the five P.M. train, and get there in time for the ball. I will telegraph that I am coming. But I cannot get away before that."

"That will do."

When I went home I found that no letters had arrived from Marian for me. I was very busy—I will not answer for presentiments—but I got through a quantity of letters, accounts, arrangements, as if I had had a notion that it would be long before I did the same again. It was three in the morning before I had finished.

Since Marian had left I slept in a little room next to the library, but this evening, from some cause I could not have explained, I had given orders that I would sleep upstairs. As I went up the broad flight which led to the rooms peculiarly appropriated to Marian, I stopped to look out at one of the windows. The whole earth was white with snow. It was falling with amazing thickness and rapidity. There are few things more ghastly of the kind than the noiseless fall of a heavy snow-storm, and I shivered as I dropped the curtain.

In passing through Marian's dressing-room and boudoir, I noticed, without being scarcely aware of it, how deserted and dismantled they seemed.

The bedroom also had a bare look, and I distinguished that some little miniatures and ornaments had been taken down.

I was strangely excited as I tried to sleep. "Some persons are particularly affected by the atmospheric influence of a night like this," I thought. My pulses throbbed, my temples beat, my lips were parched,—something of the wonderful effect produced by

the Indian hemp seemed to me to be produced by the snow-charged air; feverish visions assailed me—not dreams, for I was awake, and yet my will had as little control as in sleep;—pitiable recollections, undescribable yearnings, voluptuous memories, a rush of bitter recollections, and then a sudden blank horror. When I rose there were drops of damp on my brow, as after an illness.

When I went down-stairs the snow had ceased falling, and the sky was clear and bright as crystal. A hard frost, such as had not been remembered in the country for years, had frozen earth and water into one glittering white surface.

When I informed my old housekeeper that I was going to Talbot House for a few days, she requested me to make certain arrangements for some of the cottagers. Such an intensity of cold was what they were totally unprepared to meet. I am glad I did so.

In the morning I had a few lines from Maynard to say that he would try to start by an earlier train, for the roads between the station and Talbot House would be as slippery as glass, and we should be hours, and not minutes, doing the five miles. At last I had made all my arrangements, sent my luggage, and prepared to walk to meet the train. Just as I was going the postman brought the letters; he had been of course detained by the iron-bound roads. I slipped mine into my pocket. There were none that demanded immediate attention.

When I reached the railroad Maynard's servant overtook me; he could not leave by that train. I was to tell Nora not to be anxious; if he were delayed he would telegraph, but he was in great hopes of arriving that night.

I was so busy wondering what excuse or explanation I should give of my sudden arrival, that the time passed quickly.

When I reached the end of my journey there was a great difficulty to find a conveyance. By the offer of preposterous payment, I found a man willing to convey my luggage on a handbarrow, and there was nothing left for me but to walk.

I did so. I never shall forget the glory of that evening. The stars were as large and brilliant as in Southern latitudes. The air was bright with the cold. "Like fire-flies tangled in a silver braid," the branches

of the trees looked glowing and luminous amid the frosty brilliants with which they were sheathed.

But in the utter absence of road our progress was slow. It was nearly eleven when we reached the Hall. Coming on foot in this manner, my arrival was entirely unnoticed. The quadrangle was one blaze of light. The ball had commenced. I would not disturb any one, but asked to be taken to the room which I knew was prepared for Maynard. When there, I determined to wait his arrival, and drawing my chair by the fire took out my letters to read by way of beguiling the time. After perusing two or three of little importance, I took up one which was addressed in a strange hand.

It was a communication from a lawyer. Its purport was a demand of legal separation, separate maintenance, etc., etc., on the part of my wife.

A few lines from Marian herself were enclosed. They ran thus:—

"I choose this method of communication that you may know my resolve is not to be shaken.

"I have acquired a knowledge of you these last few months which would render our living under the same roof impossible.

"My English or my Venetian rival may console you.

"My fixed determination is to go to Italy. I require a warmer climate for my health. It will be beneficial also to Nina. Harry will join us after he has left school.

"I do not reproach or blame you. Be just to me. All my friends know that my health requires this change. It will be your own fault if, by any idle opposition, you draw down on us a scandalous publicity. I only ask you to forget me and leave me free.

"MARIAN."

I read this letter twice over. This, then, was her plan. Liberty, self-indulgence, luxury—without a hated husband. For me, I was to be left with my household gods shrouded around me, there where I had deserted the altars for her.

I now know, or think I have reason to know, it was only a threat. She felt sure that, to avoid running the gauntlet of country gossip, I would be willing to conciliate her. She trusted that there was still sufficient softness in my heart towards her to make me dread a life-long parting. It was a bold stroke; but she had well calculated

its chances. If successful in making me anxious to avoid a separation, she could make her own terms; and if it came to the worst, and I was obdurate, she gained freedom, and the sympathy which a beautiful woman driven from her home by the infidelity of her husband is sure to excite in all right-thinking persons.

I was calm; but for a moment everything swayed around me, and there was a surging sound in my ears as if I was at sea. I then rose, and taking a pencil, wrote a few lines on the back of the note.

"I have read your letter since I arrived here. It is by a chance that it is so, but that chance may be life or death to both. Meet me in the conservatory directly, and after we have spoken face to face for five minutes, if you persist in your wish, we will part forever."

I called a servant, and told him to find Mrs. Spencer, and give her that note as soon as he could.

I did not wish to be found here by Maynard; I therefore left the room, and found my way along a passage which I hoped might lead me by some back-stairs to the conservatory. At the upper end was a door; I opened it. It led into a gallery, which ran round a saloon, or smaller hall, raised by a few stairs from the large entrance-hall. The dancing was there. I looked down for a moment. It was a whirl of festal dresses, lights, and garlands. The musicians were in a temporary erection almost opposite to me, but somewhat lower.

As I stood it seemed to me that the whole gallery rocked to and fro, and that the draperies and flags which had been arranged above and beneath to mask the beams of the stand for the orchestra, shone as if fire had been behind them. There was a hot vapor which rose that was almost stifling, and a red glow through the air which even the blaze of lights could not account for or explain.

As I leaned down my eyes were caught and riveted by one figure, which made me forget everything else. Marian was standing a little behind the dancers, listening to Lascelles, who was talking earnestly to her.

There is an air of Weber's which I never hear without its reminding me, in some strange and incongruous manner, of Marian

as I now saw her. In all the great composer's music there is beneath the melody and beauty an undertone of something magical and wild which almost produces a dissonance; a dissonance not in the harmony itself, but in the effect produced. Marian's aspect as she thus stood, with diamonds glittering on her hair, breast, and arms, her dress, of some silver tissue, floating like a pale flame around her, and the inexplicable expression of her face—half triumph, half melancholy—had the same mysterious and fatal sweetness.

I turned away, and tried to shut out the vision from brain and heart. I crossed the hall, and at last entered a conservatory gorgeous with tropical bloom, and radiant with colored lamps, but as I had expected when I asked Marian to join me there, entirely deserted and untenanted. I stood there for awhile, concealed by a huge stand of broad-leaved plants. I sought a moment for reflection, but my senses seemed spell-bound. Neither grief nor rage, but a sullen and stupid indifference was gaining possession of me. There was also a coward and abject feeling, which galled me, even at the moment I could not deny to myself that I felt it. Did I yet cling to Marian's presence? Did the idea that I should see her never more, never more as in the old time beside me, sting deeper than all the foregone alienation and severance? Did I yet prize the goblet though the wine was all spilt?

As I thus stood two ladies passed me.

"How late your husband is," said one.

"Yes; but he will come I know if he can. You must remember the roads are in a dreadful state."

"Yes, one sheet of ice is round the house; there is not a drop of water for miles; every pond, every stream is frozen. I pity any one travelling such a night, Nora."

"I hope Mr. Spencer will come with him." Her companion sighed deeply, but did not reply.

"Shall we go back, Fanny?"

"Wait a minute—the ball-room is suffocating."

"Yes: I do not think it a good plan to have blocked up the doors at one end."

"They could not put the stand for the band anywhere else; and it looks very well as you enter, all blazing with light as it is

—the music seems to come out of the light.”

“Yes, but there is something peculiarly stifling in the air.”

“Let us go into your room for a few minutes, Nora. I feel so nervous and foolish to-night, as if something were going to happen. I wish your husband would come.”

“Come along, then—we will be quiet for a few minutes.”

They passed on.

CHAPTER XI.

How long I remained in the semi-stupor into which I had fallen I cannot say. Through the chaos into which my thoughts and feeling were rapidly merging I could hear the music of the ball swelling and falling in the distance. There was something hideous to me in the sounds. A measureless disgust at life, at its hollow cheats, its sickening illusions, was sweeping over me wave upon wave, and to hear from out of these depths into which I was sinking these sounds of festival seemed a refinement of torture. Those joyous cadences ringing through the air with a fall of light playful notes, or rising with sudden breaks into a gush of more spirited and resolute measures, mocked the wretch whose life would be musicless evermore. Would Marian come? But why was I so unmanned? Nay, it was no use deceiving myself. What other end could there be to our union? But we all invariably shut our eyes to the inevitable law of consequences, and hope for exceptional miracles to save us from the effects of our own actions. I knew Marian. Alas! of what avail was the knowledge? Could it shield me now? A few years ago, after having borne one hundredth part of the pain I had lately gone through, I should have welcomed escape, freedom, absence; but I was a soberer, sadder person now. True, her falsehood, her heartlessness, her deceit, had worn my life as a sword wears out a scabbard, but the scabbard has been shaped to the sword—withdraw the weapon, and the sheath remains empty, defaced, useless.

I started as if I had been stung as I thought thus, and leaned my head against one of the columns of the conservatory.

How it seemed to vibrate with the voluptuous thrill of the music and the dance so near me! I listened with a staining eager-

ness, and wondered how long it would last. Hours and hours seemed to have elapsed while I thus stood listening here, the night and I, sole audience of all these festal melodies, when suddenly there was a sharp pause as if all the instruments had shot off into a shock of silence, and all the steps had been transfixed into sudden motionlessness, and then from the topmost height of stillness the night and I were plunged into the wildest chaos of shrieks, screams, and tumult. Cry upon cry resounded through the whole house and pealed through conservatory and through hall and through basement, and in a moment every place was filled with persons rushing, scrambling, flying from some pursuing horror. Women fainting, sobbing, shrieking, men supporting them, crowding round them, blocking up the passages, filling up the doors, all blindly seeking flight, and each in his frantic effort to force his way becoming an obstacle to himself and others. It was a fearful scene of desperate fear and maddened selfishness; but I had caught, higher than the loudest shriek, the word “Fire!” and my name called in a frenzy of appeal by Marian.

I had paused a second, and then, darting through a side passage, had crossed the whole length of the house, and battled my way through the descending fugitives up the few steps which led to the ball-room.

O God! shall I ever forget what I saw? The room was almost deserted, yet a roaring sound filled it, and through volumes of black smoke pouring out towards where I stood, I could discern that at the opposite end, there was a wall of flame mounting higher and higher, till the long lurid forked tongues licked the roof over the gallery in which had sat the musicians. The whole of the draperies and beams had fallen into ashes, and in front of all, with her light robes blown out behind her in one red halo of fire, her face convulsed with fear, her mouth black and distorted, wildly swaying to and fro as if for shelter, stood Marian—alone! She did not see me, for her eyes were closed, but she heard a step, and with one cry and bound forwards, tossing up her arms, round which the fire, like the coiled rings of a serpent, was burning closer and closer, she rushed into my arms.

“Save me! save me!” she said.

I held her, I pressed her, I clasped her,

till my own hair and face and breast were scorched and burning in the same flames, and tried by the very closeness of the embrace to overcome the dread power which held her. I struggled with it as with a beast of prey. I drew her nearer and nearer to a door from which hung a woollen curtain, which I would have folded round her, but, after the first moment of passive endurance, she struggled so violently that it was almost impossible to hold her, and my own senses were failing me from the smoke, the flame, and that loud deafening voice of the fire. The last thing I remember was some heavy cloak being thrown (by some person who perilled life in entering the blazing ring of fire which encircled us) round us, or rather over us, for I had at last tottered and fallen, still clutching Marian, but with a horrible sense that what I held, or dress or flesh, was pulverizing in my grasp. I remember nothing more!

It must have been four or five days afterwards when I regained clear consciousness. I was in a burning fever, and this gave me a sudden and delirious and fictitious strength. I was in bed. It must have been late at night, or rather early in the morning, for there was that indescribable chill in the air which is the harbinger of dawn, and which penetrates with a mysterious and piercing power even in a closed room.

I saw that there was a mattress in the furthest part of the room on the floor, and that my servant was asleep on it.

I tried to raise my hands, but they were stiff from pain, and swathed in some soft wool which made them powerless.

I did not at once remember where I was. I fancied it was the continuation of my long illness after my return from the Continent years ago. I expected to see my mother enter. I thought of the Grange, of the Warburtons.

The door opened and a man entered. He did not come up to the bed, and I could not see his face. He roused the servant, and they talked together.

I waited.

Then I heard from below the tramp of horses, as of carriages being drawn before the house very slowly. "For fear of disturbing me," I thought, and closed my eyes.

When I opened them Maynard stood beside the bed.

There was a night-light near the bed, and I saw he was dressed as for a journey. He looked very pale.

"You are better, Spencer," he said, for he saw there was recognition in my eyes. I remembered now.

"Better, yes. Where is Marian?"

His voice was very low and sad as he answered.

"You did all that you could—she did not suffer after— It was a frightful accident—many have been sadly hurt—no one can account for it, except that in lighting up the room some spark must have fallen on the artificial wood-work which supported the musicians' gallery. It must have been going on for hours before it was discovered, and then it had spread far and wide, the difficulty of obtaining water, the panic, the draughts produced by the sudden rush outwards and opening of every door and window, by which escape could be sought, increased the danger.

"And Marian?"

"No one can explain it clearly; but it seems she had only that minute left the dancing. A servant, so says Lascelles, had given her a note, and she crossed over from the dancers and took it to read and to answer, under the musicians' gallery where the greatest light was; some portion of the crumbling drapery must have fallen on her dress, for she was in flames in a moment;—too frightened to move at first, and then too far from the door to reach it. She never spoke again, but was insensible to the last. The physicians say the fright must have produced a congestion of the brain; she did not suffer; had it not been for this congestion you would have saved her."

How kindly Maynard tried to convey comfort.

"It was a dreadful fatality her receiving that note," he continued.

I groaned.

"I arrived in the very midst of the confusion. I have done all that I thought you would wish. I am going now."

"Going!"

"To Speynings. Nora will do her best for you, though her hands are quite full. Poor Fanny injured herself very much in trying to save you both. It was too late for Marian, but I think but for her you must have perished, too."

I turned away my head ; I could not control the poor womanish tears ; from what untold depths of bitterness did they not flow !

Maynard left the room, and he beckoned to the servant to follow him to receive some more orders.

I waited. I felt that the fever was mounting to my brain, but I was cunning and guarded as madness always is.

I rose, upheld by a strange strength, and got out of bed, and supporting myself as best I might, tottered to the window. I opened the curtains—the shutters were closed but not fastened—with great difficulty, owing to my bandaged hands, I opened them and looked out. Had I not been in this strange, half-somnambule state I could not have done it.

I looked out, it was not quite dark ; the early dawn of a winter morning was gray in the sky. As far as could be seen one carpet of spotless white covered the earth, but beside the house some dark vehicles were drawn, and there the pawing and stamping of the horses had blackened and broken up the snow. There were torches flaring about, held by men in funeral garments.

I was so stupified that I did not immediately understand what it was ; when suddenly, as the ghastly procession ranged itself in order, I saw that it was a funeral. There was the hearse, and then, as if rung on my brain with agonizing distinctness, I heard the bells of the neighboring church toll—toll slowly, and then the whole array defiled before the house, and it took the direction, not of the church but of the neighboring station.

It then all flashed upon me : Maynard was going to Speynings ; that hearse which I saw was bound there, too ; that bell which was clanging in my brain with such fearful and tragic pathos told me with its iron tongue what it was I looked upon. This was the last that I should ever see—the last I should ever hear of—Marian. I felt as if that sound had cloven me to the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

A LONG period ensued of darkness and delirium. I remember by snatches certain changes, but the mass of days which passed were lost to me. I have only one distinct recollection of that time. Over and over

again that spectral-looking funeral procession over the sullied snow, the flare of the torches, and the tolling of the bell were repeated, till I wonder life did not perish in the suffering. I witnessed it as one might witness a scene in a play, but I could not escape from it. As soon as the end came it was repeated all over again, till I became insensible ; but with the miserable return of consciousness returned this nightmare of pain and horror with more and more verisimilitude, and it was rendered yet more vivid by the utter oblivion in which I remained of everything else.

I had a faint notion that I had been moved, that I had been borne through the air : but it was at intervals only, and this notion was unconnected with any feeling of leaving one place or arriving at another, and was only bewildering and unintelligible.

At last, after a longer period of utter darkness than any that had preceded it, I clearly felt that life, sentient life, was no longer swaying backwards and forwards on a trembling balance, but was settling and righting itself. I was utterly powerless to move hand and foot, but I opened my eyes, and by the uncertain light of a flickering fire I could distinguish that I was in the small room next to the library at Speynings. For the first time for months no phantoms clouded my vision, and my hearing, which seemed endowed with double its usual acuteness, was no longer oppressed with any unreal sound.

I heard the irregular drop of the coal-ashes from the fire, and the crackling of the wood, and the faint breathing of some one—a woman—seated beside the curtain at the foot of the bed. There was another person also in the room seated on some low seat before the fire, for I could see the shadow of her figure on the ground as the light from the fire rose and fell.

The silence was unbroken. I could make no sign or sound, and the two persons who watched might have been statues from their motionlessness. The room was quite dark, but whether it was morning or evening I knew not. At last I heard the door open, and a footstep, so gentle that no ear save one so preternaturally acute as mine could have detected it, slowly and cautiously advanced into the room.

The lady approached the person in the

chair, who rose as she touched her lightly on the shoulder. I recognized her then: she was the woman who had been my mother's maid, whose husband's vote I had tried to secure at the time of the election. She had nursed my mother in her last illness, and they had sent for her for me.

"Has he moved, nurse?"

"No, ma'am."

"It is six o'clock; you had better go and take your two hours' rest. There is some tea in your room. The doctor will be here at eight."

"Yes, ma'am."

The woman who answered went away, and the lady having bent over me, and listened attentively, took her place.

I recognized, by the height and the figure, Nora Maynard.

As she turned round to the fire she was first aware that there was some one before it. She started, but controlling herself, in a very hushed whisper asked:

"Is it you, Fanny?"

"Yes."

"My poor Fanny! what are you doing there? Have you not been in bed all night?"

"No."

"How wrong! and you are only just out of bed yourself—you will be ill again."

There was no answer, and again a dead silence. Presently Fanny rose and approached the bed. She knelt beside it, and stooped low over it; but from the position in which my head was placed she could not see my face.

"How long, Nora, did the doctor say the stupor would last?"

Nora hesitated.

"If he did not regain his consciousness he would die, he said, did he not?"

"Let us hope—" said Nora, very faintly.

Fanny turned, and kneeling on the ground, as she was, put her head down on Nora's knee, and I could see that her whole frame trembled with the violence of her emotion.

"You must not, Fanny, must not," said poor Nora, bending over her.

"I must."

"Oh, Fanny, I do not understand you: it is very sad, very dreadful, poor man, but—"

"Nora," said Fanny, raising her small head with that singular dignity of bearing which was so peculiarly her own, "I have

loved him all my life: hush, he will never know it, he is dying."

"Loved him!"

"Yes: when I was a child I was taught, persuaded, encouraged to love him by his mother. When I was a girl it was the same, she hoped and led me to hope he loved me; he was so good, so loveable then; we were so happy; those impressions, Nora, are ineffaceable; then came your sister, and all was changed. I kept away—saw little of him—but it was too late to undo what had grown with my growth, and mixed indelibly with every feeling of my heart. I could subdue the expression of it, and he never even guessed it, but his mother understood me, and when she died in my arms she prayed me by that love, although I had then overcome it, to forgive his wrongs to her, and to be his friend still."

"I always thought you hated him."

"One day, inspired by some regret for the past, he began speaking to me with something of the old affection; but as I knew that he was unchanged towards Marian, though she was then not free, my anger and scorn knew no bounds."

"And then?"

"We became entirely estranged, and I thought my heart was completely hardened against him: but when I saw, some time after his marriage, how he needed friends, when I could trace some of the old kindness of heart in many of his acts at Speynings, my heart shook off that foolish resentment, and I remembered my promise to his mother, and I resolved to be again his friend."

"My poor Fanny!"

"You may well pity me;" and the tears choked her voice as she drooped her head lower and lower to Nora's very feet. "It was very hard to see him suffer, to read it in his altered face, and to know it was irrevocable. Nora, had it been possible I could have knelt at Marian's feet to beseech her to love him, but that she never did. Her strange conduct to me at Talbot House, half pity and half scorn, finally opened my eyes: she had read my secret, though no one else had, and I determined to leave Speynings forever."

"But, Fanny, you knew all his faults?"

"Yes."

"I have heard you say he was often very selfish?"

"Yes."

"Weak—fickle?"

"Yes."

Nora kissed the hands which were clasped over the head.

"Nora," said Fanny, in almost a solemn voice, "is it not the essential attribute of love that it has insight? I saw evil, but I knew there was good which could overcome it: it had been there once. God knows I did no wrong to Marian even in my most secret thought, or in my inmost heart, or I could not speak so now; you know I tried to save her life at the peril of my own for his sake. I did not know Hubert was there when I rushed to her in spite of all."

"You did—you did, though Maynard held you back."

"Think if there could be wrong to her in my love when I can thus speak of it to her sister, and when he is dying." And again tears choked her voice.

And this love had been beside me all my life, and I was as ignorant of it as a blind man is of a star. Oh, fool! oh, idiot—and I dared to call that feeling love, which custom, satiety, faults in another had so changed from love to indifference. Well may the great poetess say,

"Those *never* loved
Who dream they loved *once*."

Here was love, and mine for Marian had been but a base and specious counterfeit.

Had I already passed the portals of the grave and listened to the speech of angels! If so, it could not have been with a more complete sense of renunciation and divorce from self.

It seemed to me that I was shown, as by an inexorable judge, the great gift which had been bestowed on me, and of which I had taken no account. What might have been!—what never could be!—I was dying. It was well to die, having foregone such happiness and inflicted and endured such misery.

Suddenly, Fanny, who had been quite still and passive for a few minutes, raised her head.

"Don't cry about me, Nora; I feel your warm tears over my hand. But, darling,—my own dear Nora, you will understand why I came here for the last night."

"Must you leave us to-day?"

"Yes, my aunt wants me more than you do, and, besides, I can take that poor little Nina out of your way."

"What shall I do without you for so many months?"

"It was settled so long ago. I cannot alter it now,—I have no right to do so; but, Nora, you will let me know *whatever* happens, directly,—do not delay."

Again there was a pause, and then they heard, as well as I did, the distant sound of a carriage.

Fanny rose to her feet:—

"I must be gone before Dr. Conway comes in."

She stooped over the bed, and those soft, pure lips breathed a prayer over me which was like a blessing. The paused one minute, and her tears fell warm on my forehead; and then she left the room. The doctor came in.

Reader, I did not die.

There is a strange reparative power in all of us, born of the soul, but which influences the body. That spring of vitality had been touched in me. I recovered to the surprise of all: I was for months a sufferer—it is possible that all my life I shall be an invalid, but I have regained sufficient health to be able to work at the work which was given me to do in this world. I think that ere long I proved to the loving soul, which had so gently scanned my soul, that the true inscription was there, though so much dross and corruption had covered it.

Many long months passed before Fanny and I met again. The innocent gladness with which she congratulated me on my recovery pierced me to the heart. If, amid what Patmore calls "the glooms of hell," some wretch should look up to a smiling angel above him, would he not have a deeper sense of his own loss and ruin? The confession I had overheard had separated me from her, as from something enshrined and sainted. My reverence for that pure loving nature removed it from me.

Death had won for me that holy chrism (the utterance of her love), but life dis-crowned me. I felt that a heart all scarred over with one fatal passion was not a heart that could be offered to her. I was like one who has knelt to Baal, and poured out all his wine and oil on unholy altars, where the true

deity manifests itself. Where, amid those ruins and that waste, can a fitting temple be erected.

But I was wrong in this as in all, and slowly I learned it.

If the voice of love calls to us—though we are buried in sin and misery, sepulchred in corruption, with the defeat of death on our brows and the grave-clothes on our limbs—we must come forth and obey it.

One evening, about eighteen months after Fanny's return to the Maynard's, I called at a lodge in which lived that old servant of my mother's who had nursed me in my last severe illness. She was a widow now and had removed here near her old home. She was dying, poor woman, of consumption. When I entered the parlor the little servant who waited on her told me Miss Fanny was with her, and asked me to wait. I consented. The parlor opened out of the bed-room, and I could hear Fanny's gentle voice reading to her. I heard the words distinctly, and they lost none of their soothing and healing power on me when uttered by that voice. When Fanny had finished she asked the poor creature if she could do anything for her, or bring anything the next day.

"No, ma'am. I have everything I can want, the squire lets me want for nothing. He is very good—his mother's own son, after all."

I did not hear Fanny's reply.

"I do wish he looked happier like."

"He has suffered a good deal."

"Yes, ma'am; but there's no reason he shouldn't get over it. He did his duty to her, if any man did."

Fanny was again inaudible.

"But you would make him happier, Miss. Please, don't be angry with me—it's flying in the face of Providence not to see it; and how glad Madam Spencer would have been!"

"Hush!" I heard Fanny say; "you must not speak so, Susan. It would vex me, but that I'm going away."

"Lor, Miss, don't you say so. When?"

"Not yet, Susan; but you know I go always at this time for my six months' visit to Scotland."

I would not overhear more, but gently slipped out and resolved to return the next day.

I turned into the avenue and paced it up and down.

At last Fanny came out, and I met her at the gate as she turned in the direction of the rectory.

"Poor Susan is sinking fast," she said to me.

"Yes, it must soon be over. She is a faithful good creature."

"Yes, she is such a link with the past that to me it will be really a great loss. There is so little left now of the old times at Speynings——"

These words seemed to drop from her unconsciously.

"Worse than nothing," I replied, "for that which is left there is so unworthy of that time——"

She interrupted me quickly.

"Do not speak so. I was foolish."

"Just. Only just."

"No, not just. You have done all you could. If the dead could speak with my lips, they would say you had done well, Hubert."

And for the first time, in her emotion, for long years, she called me by that name.

"Fanny," I said, "have you forgiven me, then,—have you felt that if repentance, devotion, reverence, could merit forgiveness, I was not unworthy——"

"I have nothing to forgive; no one has been more sorry for you in your grief; no one has so truly wished to see you happy once more."

"Happiness is a word that has no meaning in it for me; for years I sought it regardless of everything but my own selfish interpretation of it, and it has left a bitter and deadly taste in me. I need pardon, compassion, love;—will you forgive, will you pity, will you love?"

She started, and turned pale.

"Speak, Fanny; I can bear rejection; I have nerved myself to do so, for I know my unworthiness; but I wish you to know, come what may, that my whole heart is yours. Will you accept it?"

Her hand fell in mine as she murmured—

"Yes."

"Will you take my life to unite to yours—yours so good, pure, true; mine so full of soils and stains?"

"Yes."

"Let me kneel to thank God—to thank

you for your goodness, and to swear to you you shall not repent it."

"It is not goodness, Hubert, for I have always loved you."

How can I convey in words the expression of her face, the tone of her voice, when she said this. But I was lifted by them into a region high above all past sorrows and errors:—

"Love like death unlocks the portal
Through which souls redeemed go,
And the mortal to immortal
Passes with transfigured brow."

And I can say in concluding this chronicle of my early life, that the glow of heart which was excited by Fanny's words never faded. If in my life I have avoided evil or inclined to good, those words were my shield and my talisman. I had loved with the lower part of my nature, and that love had swathed, bound, and covered me from truth and heaven. I was now loved, and I loved with a sacred and purifying love, and my soul was revealed and made free. The sacred and profane love of Titian was to me a fact, and not an allegory.

A History of American Manufactures, from 1608 to 1860. Vol. I. Philadelphia, Young & Co. London, Low & Co.

IN the eye of a citizen of the United States who still looks to President Lincoln as the elected chief of his Republic, the history of American manufactures is nothing less than the history of American freedom. Under the reign of the old colonial doctrines, the dream of the American patriot was to see his country independent of European importations; while the statesman of the mother country was no less tenacious of the idea of discouraging all attempts to establish manufactures in His Majesty's plantations. Adam Smith's immortal work first exposed the fallacy of maintaining costly colonies as "vents for our produce;" but perhaps nothing contributed more to give a practical demonstration to the truth of his principles than the success of the American Rebellion. France, which had been jubilant over England's expected ruin by the loss of her exclusive trade, saw to her astonishment that her hereditary enemy grew even more prosperous after the triumph of General Washington than before; while our trade with the Colonies, instead of being annihilated, went on increasing with a new impetus. Since then free-trade doctrines have become so well-established among us, that Englishmen feel a difficulty in imagining the days when a British minister could rise in his seat and declare that our colonists should not be permitted to manufacture for themselves a single nail, and grave acts of Parliament could set forth an intention to keep the Colonies in "firmer dependence," and make this kingdom "a staple" for supplying them, in order to "keep our plantations' trade to ourselves." If these things, however, are forgotten among us, the tradition of them still lingers across the Atlantic, where Morrill tariffs and other barriers for keeping out European goods, and giving artificial support to local manufactures, always find support among a large class of the population. The American's favorite notion, that every new industrial establishment, even though fostered by bounties or prohibitions,

is a gain to the State, largely pervades this volume. When the author informs us that after the peace "a flood of European manufactures" was poured into the Colonies, the people of all classes being but "too ready" to escape from the restraints to which they had subjected themselves; and remarks in his Preface, that "though emancipated from foreign political domination, the people seemed yet chained in complete dependence upon the workshops of Europe, from which, notwithstanding our marvellous progress, they are not entirely liberated,"—we can feel no doubt of the extent of Mr. Bishop's protectionism. Apart from these theoretical heresies, however, his work may be read with interest, and, as a book of reference, may be consulted with advantage. Mr. Bishop's plan is to trace the establishment of all the principal branches of industry separately, and record their progress throughout the States to the present time. His first volume ends with the accomplishment of the Revolution.—*Athenæum*.

COINS INSERTED IN TANKARDS.—About a century and a half ago, as I imagine, it was the fashion to insert silver coins in English glass tankards. Is anything known of the makers of them, and whether the coins enclosed are a sign of the date? I have two: one containing a twopenny piece of George II., and another with a half-crown of Charles II. The design of the two is very similar, except that the one with the earlier coin is not finished quite as well as the other. The half-crown, however, is rubbed; and so must have been some considerable time in circulation, which somewhat militates against the tankard being contemporary with the coin. Would any of your correspondents be kind enough to inform us whether they possess any such specimens of glass, and the coins enclosed in them? It would be of some interest to those who care about English glass to have this point settled.

J. C. J.

—Notes and Queries.

From Good Words.

CONCERNING ATMOSPHERES: WITH
SOME THOUGHTS ON CURRENTS.

I AM not going to write an essay on Ventilation, important as that subject unquestionably is; nor am I about to enter into any discussion of the various elements of which the air we breathe is made up. I am aware, indeed, that for the maintenance of animal and intellectual energy in their best state, it is expedient that the atmosphere should contain a certain amount of ozone; but what ozone is I do not know, and neither, I believe, does any one else. And on the matter of material currents, whether ocean currents, atmospheric currents, or river currents, I am not competent to afford the scientific reader much information. I know, indeed, as most people know, that it is well for Britain that the warm Gulf Stream sets upon our shores. I read in the newspapers how bottles thrown into the sea turn up in distant and surprising places. I am aware that the Trade Winds blow steadily from west to east. And I have sat tranquilly, and looked intently at the onward flow of streams; from the slow and smooth canal-like river that silently steals on through the rich level English landscape, to the wild Highland torrent that tears down its rocky bed, in white foam and thunder.

But what I wish, my reader, that you and I should do at present, is to take a large view of the case, not needing any special knowledge of physical science. Let us remember just this, that the atmosphere in which we live is something that touches and affects us at every inch of our superficies, and at every moment of our life. It is not to say merely that we breathe it; but that it exerts upon every part of us, inner and outer, an influence which never ceases, and which, though possibly not much marked at the time, produces in the long run a very great and decided effect. You draw in the air from *ague-laden fens*, and you do not find anything very particular in each breath you draw. But breathe *that*, and live in *that*, for a few weeks or months, and see what will come to you. Or you go in the autumn, weak and weary with the season's work and worry, jaded and nervous, to the seaside, and the bracing atmosphere in a little while insensibly does its work; your limbs grow strong and active again, and

your mind grows energetic and hopeful. And you have doubtless felt for yourself how the heavy, smoky air of a large city makes you dull and stupid, and how the sparkling draughts you draw in of the keen, unbreathed air of the mountains, exhilarate and nerve anew. And as for currents, without going into details, we know this general fact: If you cast a floating thing upon a current, it will insensibly go along with the current. There may not be a stronger or a more perceptible push at one moment than at another; but there is an influence which in the main is unceasing, and there is a general drifting away. Slowly, slowly, the log cast into the sea, out in the middle of the Atlantic, comes eastward, week by week, till it is thrown somewhere on the outer coast of Ireland or of the Hebrides. And when the thing cast upon the current is more energetic than a log, still the current affects it none the less really. The Mississippi steamer breasts that great turbid stream, and makes way against it; but it makes way slowly. Let the engines cease to work, and the steamer drifts as the log drifted. Or let the engines work as before, and the vessel's head be turned down the stream; and then, going with the current, its speed is doubled.

Now, the atmosphere I mean in this essay is the atmosphere in which the soul lives and breathes; and the currents, those which carry along the moral and spiritual nature to developments better or worse. Shall we say it, for the most part to worse? In this world, in a moral sense, we generally drift towards evil, if we drift at all. You must warp up the stream if you would advance towards good. It seems to be God's purpose that anything good must be attained by effort: if you slothfully go with the current, it will be only to ill.

I am not able, just now, to give you a definition of either moral atmospheres or moral currents which satisfies me. You will gradually see my meaning, if you do not see it yet. Let it be said, generally, that to follow inclination within, or to yield to the vague influence of the things and people around you, is to drift with the moral current. And sensitively to feel the moral influences amid which you live—the moral influences arising from external nature, or from the dwelling in which you live, or from

the people with whom you associate, or from the books and newspapers and magazines and reviews you read—is to feel the moral atmosphere. And a very great part of the influence which moulds human character, and decides human destiny, is of this vague, yet pervading kind. A tree, I am told, draws the chief part of its nourishment from the air: very much more than it draws from the earth through its roots. The tree must have roots, or it would not live or grow at all: yet the multitude of leaves draw in *that* by which it mainly lives and grows. And it seems to me to be so with human beings. We must be morally rooted and grounded, as it were, by direct education, and by directly getting principles fixed in our minds. But after this is done, we mainly take our tone from the moral atmosphere. We are mainly affected by moral currents; and just as really when we strive against them as when we yield to them.

I am sure you know that a great many of the things we read—books, periodicals, and the like—affect us not so much by the ideas they convey, as by the general atmosphere with which they surround us. If you read, week by week, a clever, polished, cynical, heartless publication, it will do you harm insensibly. It will mould and color your ways of thinking and feeling much more than you would think. You like its talent, you know: but you disapprove, sometimes very keenly, its general character and tone; and you think you are so on your guard against these, inwardly protesting against them each time you feel them, that no effect will be produced by them upon you. You are mistaken in thinking so. You breathe and live in a moral atmosphere, which is quite sure to tell on you. You are cast on a current; and it needs constant pulling against it to keep you from drifting with it. And your moral nature is not (so to speak) ever on the stretch with the oars; ever in an attitude of resistance to the malaria. Yes, that clever, heartless, cynical paper will leave its impress on you by degrees. And on the other side, you know that the influence of writings which are not obtrusively instructive, may sink gently into our nature and do us much good. There is not much formal teaching in them; but as you read them, you feel you are breathing a healthy atmosphere; you are aware of a

quiet but decided and powerful current, setting steadily towards what is good and magnanimous and true.

No doubt, friendly reader, you feel that what I have said is true. In talking to people, in living in places, in reading books, you feel the atmosphere; you are aware of the current. I do not speak to people whose moral nature is callous as the hide of the rhinoceros; and who never feel the moral atmosphere at all. You might endeavor to prick a rhinoceros with a pin for some time, without awaking any sensation in that animal. And there are human beings who, it is quite evident from their conversation and their doings on various occasions, are as little sensitive to the moral atmosphere, and the laws and proprieties which arise out of it, as the rhinoceros is to the very bluntest pin. They are not aware of any influence weaker than a physical push; as you remember the man who would take no hint less marked than a kicking. But *you* know, my friend, that in talking to different people, you insensibly take your tone from them; and you talk in a way accommodated to the particular case. There are people to whom, unawares, and without purpose prepense, you find yourself talking in a loud, lively manner, which is far from your usual one. There are others to whom you insensibly speak in a quiet, thoughtful way. And you cannot help this; it is just that you feel the atmosphere, and yield to it. It is as when you go out on a crisp frosty day; and without any special intention to that effect, find yourself walking smartly and briskly along. But if it be a still, sunshiny October afternoon, amid the brown and golden woods, you will unconsciously accommodate yourself to the surroundings; you will (if there be no special call for haste) walk pensively and slow. Now, some may unjustly fancy, as they remark how different your demeanor is in the society of different people, that you are an impostor,—a hypocrite,—not to say a humbug; that you are falsely assuming a manner foreign to your own, that you may suit the different people with whom you converse. It is not so. There is no design in what you do. You are not desiring to please the loud man by assuming a loud manner, reflecting his; as I have heard of some one who was regarded as having paid a delicate but effective compliment to a great

man who wore a very odd waistcoat, by presenting himself in the presence of the great man, clad in a waistcoat exactly like his own. There is nothing of that kind; nothing insincere; nothing flunkeyish. It is only that you have a sensitive nature, which feels the atmosphere in which it is placed for the time. You know how mercury in frost feels the cold, and shrinks; it cannot help it. Then in warm weather it expands by the necessity of its nature. It always appeared to me in my childhood, that Dr. Watts effectually justifies the most offensive deportment on the part of dogs, by suggesting that it is their Maker's intention that they should exhibit such a deportment. There is a passage, not much known, in a lyric by that poet, which runs to the effect: "Let dogs delight to bark and bite, for God hath made them so." If the fact be admitted, the principle is sound; but as judicious discipline can greatly diminish the tendency of these animals to bark and bite, I doubt whether the words of Dr. Watts are to be construed in their full meaning. But there can be no question that mercury, which is a substance not accessible to moral considerations, deserves neither blame nor praise for expanding and shrinking according to its nature. And while I admit that any doings of human beings, partaking of a moral element, are (in the main) so under the control of the will, that the human beings may justly be held responsible for them, I hold that this sensitiveness to the moral atmosphere is very much a matter of original constitution, and that the man who feels it may fairly plead that his Maker "made him so." And very many people—shall we say the most exquisitely constituted of the race?—discern the moral atmosphere which surrounds some men, by a delicate and unerring intuition. There are men who bring with them a frosty atmosphere; there are men who bring a sunshiny. You know people whose stiffness of manner freezes up the frankest and most genial. You know there are people to whom you would no more think of talking of the things which interest you most, than you would think of talking to a horse; or, let us say, to a donkey. Do you suppose that I should show my marked copy of *In Memoriam* to either my friend Dr. Log, or my friend Mr. Snarling?

I dare say some of my readers, going to

see an acquaintance, have walked into his study, and found themselves, physically, in a choky, confined, hot-house atmosphere. And on entering into conversation with the man in the study, they have found, morally, the same thing repeated. The moral atmosphere was just the physical over again. You remember the morbid views, the uncharitable judgments, the despondency of tone. And I think your inward exclamation was, Oh, for fresh air, physically and morally! And, indeed, I can hardly believe that sound and healthy judgments are ever come to, or that manly and truthful thoughts are produced, except when the physical atmosphere is pure and healthful. I would not attach much importance to the vote, upon some grave matter of principle, which is come to by an excited mob of even educated men, at four o'clock in the morning, in an atmosphere so thoroughly pestilential that it might knock a man down. And there are houses, on entering which you feel directly the peculiar moral atmosphere. It is oppressive. It catches your throat; it gets into your lungs; it (morally) puts a bad taste into your mouth. There are dwellings which, even in a physical sense, seem never to have fresh air thoroughly admitted; never to have the lurking malaria that hangs in corners and about window-curtains thoroughly cleared out, and the pure fresh air of heaven let in to fill every inch of space. There are more dwellings where this is so in a moral sense. You enter such a dwelling; you talk to the people in it. You at once feel oppressed. You feel stupid; worse than that, you feel sore and cantankerous. You feel you are growing low-minded. Anything like magnanimity or generosity goes out of you. You listen to wretched sneers against everything that is good or elevating. You find a series of wretched little doings and misdoings dwelt upon with weary iteration and bitter exaggeration. You hear base motives suggested as having really prompted the best people you know to their best doings. Did you ever spend an evening in the society of a cynical, sneering man, with some measure of talent and energy? You remember how you heard anything noble or disinterested laughed at; how you heard selfish motives ascribed to everybody; how some degrading association was linked with everything pure and excellent. Did you not feel

deteriorated by that evening? Did you not feel that (morally) you were breathing the atmosphere of a sewer or a pigsty? And even when the atmosphere was not so bad as that, you have known the houses of really excellent folk, which were pervaded by such a stiffness, such an unnatural repression of all natural feeling, such a sense of constraint of soul, that when you fairly got out of the house at last, you would have liked to express your relief, and to give way to your pent-up energies, by wildly dancing on the pavement before the door like a Red Indian. And, indeed, you might very probably have done so, but for the dread of the police; and for the fear that, even through the dark, you might be discerned by the eyes of Mrs. Grundy.

Some people are so energetic and so much in earnest, that they diffuse about them an atmosphere which is keenly felt by most men. And it often happens that you are very much affected by the moral influence of people, from almost all whose opinions you differ. I have no doubt that human beings who differ from Dr. Arnold and Mr. Hughes on almost every point of belief, have been greatly influenced, and influenced for the better, by these good men. There is something in the atmosphere that breathes from both of them that tends to higher and purer ways of thinking and feeling; that tends to make you act more constantly from principle, and to make you feel the solemnity of this life. And without supposing any special good-fortune in the case of the reader, I may take for granted that you have known two or three persons whose presence you felt like a constant rebuke to anything mean or wrong in thought or deed, and like a constant stimulus to things good and worthy. You have known people, in the atmosphere of whose influence the evil in your nature seemed cowed and abashed. It seemed to die out like a nettle in frost; that clear, brisk, healthy atmosphere seemed to kill it. And you may have known men, after reading whose pages, or listening to whose talk, you felt more of kindly charity towards all your brethren in the helplessness and sinfulness of humanity. Of course, to diffuse a powerful influence, whether towards evil or good, a man must possess great force and earnestness of character. Ordinary mortals are like the chameleon, which

takes something of the color of any strong-colored object it is placed near. They take their tone very much from the more energetic folk with whom they are placed in contact. I dare say you have known a man who powerfully influences for good the whole circle of men that surrounds him. Such a one must have a vast stock of vital and moral energy. Most people are like the electric eel, very much exhausted after having given forth their influence. A few are like an electric battery, of resources so vast that it can be pouring out its energy without cease. There are certain physical characteristics which often, though not always, go with this moral characteristic. It is generally found in connection with a loud, manly voice, a burly figure, a very frank address. Not always, indeed; there have been puny, shrinking, silent men, who mightily swayed their fellow-men, whether to evil or to good. But in the presence of the stronger physical nature, you feel something tending to make you feel cheerful, hopeful, energetic. I have known men who seemed always surrounded by a healthy, bracing atmosphere. When with such, I defy you to feel down-hearted, or desponding, or slothful. They put new energy, hopefulness, and life into you. Yes, my reader, perhaps you have found it for yourself, that to gain the friendship of even one energetic, thoughtful, good man, may suffice to give a new and healthier tone to your whole life. Yes, the influence of such a one may insensibly reach through all you think, feel, and do; as the material atmosphere pervades all material things. And such an influence may be exerted either through a fiery energy, or by an undefinable, gentle fascination. I believe that most men felt the first of these, who knew much of Dr. Chalmers. I believe that many have felt the second of these, in their intercourse with Dr. Newman or Mr. Jowett. Possibly, we might classify mankind under two divisions: the little band whose pith or whose fascination is such that they give the tone, good or bad; that they diffuse the atmosphere: and the larger host, whose soul is receptive rather than diffusive; the great multitude of human beings who take the tone, feel the atmosphere, and go with the current. It is probable that a third class ought to be added, including those who never felt anything, particularly, at all.

When you first enter a new moral atmosphere, you feel it very keenly. But you grow less sensitive to it daily, as you become accustomed to it. It may be producing its moral effect as really; but you are not so much aware of its presence. Did you ever go to a place new to you, of very unusual and striking aspect; and did you wonder if people there live just as they do in the commonplace scenes amid which you live? Let me confess that I cannot look at the pictures of the quaint old towns of Belgium, without vaguely asking myself that question. In a lesser degree, the fancy steals in, even as one walks the streets of Oxford or of Chester. You feel how fresh and marked an atmosphere you breathe, in a visit of a few days' length to either town. But, of course, if you live in the strangest place for a long time, you will find that life there is very much what life is elsewhere. I have often thought that I should like to do my in-door work in a room whose window opened upon the sea; so close to the sea that looking out you might have the waves lapping on the rock fifteen feet below you; and that when you threw the window up, the salt breeze might come into the chamber, a little feverish perhaps with several toiling hours. Surely, I think some influence from the scene would mingle itself with all that one's mind would there produce. And it would be curious to look out, before going to bed, far over the level surface in the moonlight: to see the spectral sails passing in the distance; and to hear the never ceasing sound, old as creation. I do not know that the reader will sympathize with me; but I should like very much to live for a week or two at the Eddystone Lighthouse. There would be a delightful sense of quiet. There would be no worry. There would be plenty of time to think. It would be absolutely certain that the door-bell would never ring. And though there would be but limited space for exercise, there would unquestionably be the freshest and purest of air. No doubt if the wind rose at evening, you might through the night feel the lighthouse vibrate with the blow of the waves: but you could recall all you had read of the magnificent engineering of Smeaton; and feel no more than the slight sense of danger which adds a zest. I am aware that in a little while one would get accustomed to the whole mode of

life. The flavor of all things goes with custom. When you go back to the seaside, how salt the breeze tastes, which you never remarked while you were living there! And sometimes, looking back, you will wish you could revive the freshness and vividness of first impressions.

We have been thinking of the atmosphere diffused by books and by persons: let it be said that the thing about a book which affects your mind and character most, is not its views or arguments: it is its atmosphere. And it is so also with persons. It is not what people expressly advise you that really sways you; it is the general influence that breathes from all their life. A book may, for instance, set out sound religious views; but in such a hard cold way that the book will repel from religion. That is to say, the arguments may push one way, and the atmosphere the opposite way: and the atmosphere will neutralize the arguments and something more. And you will find people, too, whose advices and counsels are good; who often counsel their children or their friends to duty, and to earnestness in religion; but who neutralize and reverse the bearing of all these good counsels by the entire tone of their life. The words of some people say, Choose the good part, Give your soul to your Saviour, Ask for the blessed Spirit's guidance and influence day by day; but their atmosphere says, Anything for money,—for social standing,—for spitefulness,—for general unpleasantness. You will find various Pharisees now-a-days who loudly exclaim, "God be merciful to me a sinner:" but woe betide you if you venture to hint to such that anything they can do is wrong!

Let me say, that you may read and you may hear religious instruction, which without asserting anything expressly wrong, still deteriorates you. It lowers you; you are the worse for it. There is an indefinable, but strongly felt lack of the Christian spirit about it. Its views are mainly right; but somehow its atmosphere is wrong. I do not say this is any narrow spirit: it is not against one party of religionists more than another that I should bring this charge. Perhaps the teaching which is soundest in doctrine, is sometimes the most useless, through its want of the true Christian life; or through merely giving you the metaphysics of Chris-

tianity, without any real bringing of the vital truths of Christianity home to the heart, and to the actual case of those to whom they are told. I have read a book—a polished, scholarly tale, the leading character in which was a clergyman—but in reading the book you felt a strong smack of heathenism. I do not mean the savage, cannibal heathenism which still exists in the islands of the South Pacific; but the polished heathenism which was many centuries since in Greece and Rome. The clergyman was sound in dogma, I dare say, if you had asked him for a confession of his faith; but his Christianity was an outside garment, while his whole nature was saturated with the old literature and mythology of that ancient day. Then you may find a book, a religious book, containing nothing on which you could well put your finger as wrong: yet you were left with a general impression of scepticism. *That* was the atmosphere. The views and arguments are as the solid ground: but you touch the solid ground but at a single point;—the circumambient ether is all around you, and within you. I have read pages setting out somewhat sad and discouraging views; yet as you turned the pages, you were aware of a general atmosphere of hopefulness and energy. And I have listened to what might have made pages, if it had been printed (pages which assuredly I should not have read), setting out the sublimest and most glorious hopes of humanity, in a way so dreary, dull, wearisome, and stupid, that the atmosphere was most depressing. You felt as though you were environed by a damp, thick fog.

It would be an endless task to reckon up the moral atmospheres in which human beings live; or even the moral atmospheres which you yourself, my friend, have breathed. But there are some that one remembers vividly; they do not come often enough, or continue long enough, to lose their freshness. Such is the atmosphere which surrounds all operations relating to the sale and purchase of horses. You remember how, when you went to buy one of those noble animals, you found yourself surrounded by a new and strongly flavored phase of life. Was there not a general atmosphere as of swindling? You were surprised to hear lies, the grossest, told, even though they were sure to be in-

stantly detected. You felt that your ignorance and capacity of being cheated were being gauged with great skill. It is a singular thing, indeed, that one of the most useful and beautiful of God's creatures should diffuse around him a most unhealthy moral atmosphere. You may have remarked that the noble steed is not merely surrounded by an ether filled with falsehoods; but that a less irritating, though still remarkable, ingredient, mingles with it, like ozone—it is the element of slang. I have remarked this with great interest, and mused much on it without succeeding in satisfactorily accounting for it. Why is it that to say a horse is a good horse should stamp you as a green hand; but that to say the animal is no bad nag, or a fairish style of hack, should convey the idea that you know various things? And wherefore should it be, that a shallow nature should be indicated by your saying you were willing to pay fifty pounds for the horse, while untold depth and craft shall be held to be implied by the statement that your tether was half a hundred?

A very disagreeable atmosphere, diffused by various persons, is that of suspicion. Some one has done you a kind turn, and your heart warms to the doer of it. But Mr. Snarling comes in; and you tell him in hearty tones, of the kind turn, and of your warm feeling towards the man that did it. Mr. Snarling doubts; hints; insinuates; suggests a deep and traitorous design under that kind act: perhaps succeeds in chilling or souring your warm feeling; till, on the withdrawal of the unhealthy atmosphere, your better nature gets the upperhand again. And when next you meet the kind, open face of the friend who did you the kind turn, your heart smites you as you think what a wicked, suspicious creature you were while within the baleful atmosphere of Snarling. You have seen, I dare say, very shallow and empty individuals, who fancied that it made them look deep and knowing, to say that beggars, for the most part, live in great luxury, and have money in the bank. *That* may be so in rare cases; but I KNOW that the want of the poor is often very real. It comes, doubtless, in some measure, from their own sin or improvidence; and as, of course, you and I never do wrong, let us throw a very large stone at the poor creature

who is starving to-day, because she took a full meal of bread and butter and tea four days since. I have heard a man, with great depth of look, state that a certain cripple known to me could walk quite well. I asked the man for his authority. He had none, but vague suspicion. I told the man, with some acerbity (which I do not at all regret), that I knew the poor man well, and that I knew he was as crippled as he seemed. It looks knowing to declare of some poor starved creature that he is *more* rogue than fool. Whenever you hear *that* said, my reader, always ask what is the precise charge intended to be conveyed, and ask the ground on which the charge is made. In most cases you will get no answer to the second question; in very many no intelligible answer to the first. It would be a pleasant world to live in, if the people who dwell in it were such as they are represented by several persons known to me. I remember an outspoken old Scotch lady, to whom I was offering some Christian comfort after a great loss. I remember how she said, with a look as if she meant it, "If I did not believe all *that*, I should take a knife and cut my throat!" It was an honest confession of her faith, though made in unusually energetic terms. And I might say for myself, if I had not some faith in my race, it would be better to be off to the wilderness at once, or, like Timon, to the desolate shore. The wants of beggars, even of the least deserving, are, for the most part, very real. As for their luxuries, they are generally tea and buttered toast. Sometimes fried ham may also be found. Poor creatures! These things are the only enjoyments they have; and I, for one, am not ready with my anathema maranatha. I have known very suspicious and uncharitable persons who were extremely fat; doubtless they lived entirely on parched peas. And *all* the sufferings of the poor are not shams, paraded to the end of obtaining pence. I look back now, over a good many years, to the time when I was a youth at college. I remember coming home one night, between eleven and twelve o'clock, along a quiet street in a certain great city. I remember two poor girls standing in the shelter of the wall of a house, leaning against the wall, from the drenching rain. Neither noticed me. I see yet the deadly white face of one,—the haggard, sick look, as she

crouched by the wall, and leant on the other's shoulder, as if just recovering from a faint. I hear yet the anxious, despairing voice with which the other said to her, "Are you better now?" The words were not spoken at me, or spoken for the ear of any passer-by. All this was on the dark midnight street, amid the drenching rain. It was a little thing; but it brought home to one the suffering that is quietly undergone in thousands of places over Europe each day and night.

Probably you have known people, who were placed in a sphere where the atmosphere, moral and physical, was awfully depressing. They did their work poorly enough; and many blamed them severely. For myself, I was inclined to wonder that they did so well. Who could be a good preacher in certain churches of which I have known? I think there are few men more sensitive to the moral atmosphere than the preacher. There are churches in which there is a hearty atmosphere; others, in which there is a chilly atmosphere; others, with a bitter, narrow-minded, Pharisaic; others, with an atmosphere which combines the pragmatic, critical, and self-sufficient, with the densely stupid. But passing from this, I say that most men, even of those who do their work in life decently well, have only energy enough to do well if you give them a fair chance. And many have not a fair chance: some have no chance at all. There are human beings set in a moral atmosphere in which moral energy and alacrity could no more exist than physical life in the choke-damp of the mine. Be thankful, my friend, if you are placed in a fairly healthful atmosphere. You are doing fairly in it; but in a different one, you might have pined and died. You are leading a quiet Christian life, free from great sin or shame. Well, be thankful; but do not be conceited: above all, do not be uncharitable to those for whom the race and the warfare have been too much.

I have said that it is the more energetic of the race that diffuse a moral atmosphere: the ordinary members of the race feel it. The energetic give the tone; the ordinary take it. There are minds whose nature is to give out; and minds whose nature is to take in. But most men have energy enough, if rightly directed, to affect the air somewhat; and though the moral ingredient they

yield may not be much in quantity, it may be able to supply just the precious ozone. Let us try to be like the sunshiny member of the family, who has the inestimable art to make all duty seem pleasant; all self-denial and exertion, easy and desirable; even disappointment not so blank and crushing; who is like a bracing, crisp, frosty atmosphere throughout the home, without a suspicion of the element that chills and pinches. You have known people within whose influence you felt cheerful, amiable, hopeful, equal to anything! Oh, for that blessed power, and for God's grace to exercise it rightly! I do not know a more enviable gift than the energy to sway others to good; to diffuse around us an atmosphere of cheerfulness, piety, truthfulness, generosity, magnanimity. It is not a matter of great talent; not entirely a matter of great energy; but rather of earnestness and honesty—and of that quiet, constant energy, which is like soft rain gently penetrating the soil. It is rather a grace than a gift; and we all know where all grace is to be had freely for the asking.

You see, my reader, I have spoken of atmospheres and currents together. For every moral atmosphere is of the nature of a moral current. As you breathe the atmosphere, you feel that there is an active force in it: that you are beginning to drift away. It is not merely a present sense of something, that comes over you; but you know that it sets you floating onward to something beyond your present feeling. The more frequent tendency of a moral atmosphere is to assimilate your moral nature to itself. Perhaps all atmospheres, if you live in them long enough, tend to this. But there are some atmospheres which, just at first, are so very disagreeable, that their effect is repellent; they tend to make you wish to be just as different from themselves as you can. But the refined person, at first revolted by a rude and coarse atmosphere, will, in years, grow subdued to it; and the pure young soul, shocked and disgusted at the first approach of gross sin, comes at last to bear it and to exceed it. Yes, the ultimate tendency of all moral atmospheres upon all ordinary people, is to assimilate them to the element in which they live. Let men breathe any atmosphere long enough, and this will follow; save in the case of an exceptional

man here and there. It is a very bad thing for a young person to be much among worldly people, or among mere money-making people. Let us not cry down money; it is a great and powerful thing. You remember, it was not money, but the over love of money, that was the "root of all evil." But it is most unhappy to live among those from whose entire ways of thinking and talking you get the general impression, that money is the first and best thing; and that the great end of life is to obtain it; and that almost any means may be resorted to for that end. All this is not said in so many words, but it pervades you unseen; you breathe it like an unwholesome malaria. You take it in, not merely at every breath, but at every pore. And the result of years of this is, that the warm-hearted, generous youth grows into the sordid, heartless old man; and that the enthusiastic young Christian is sometimes debased into a very chilly, lifeless, and worldly middle age.

And now, before I end, let me say this. There is a certain blessed influence which can mingle itself with every moral atmosphere that a human being can honestly breathe; and which can make every such atmosphere healthful. You know what I mean. It is the influence of that Holy Spirit, whose presence the Redeemer said was more valuable and profitable than even his own; and who is promised without reservation to all who heartily ask His presence. And you know, too, that we have a sure promise, that if we build on the right foundation, the current of our whole life will tend towards what is happy and good. There may be a little eddy backwards here and there, and sometimes what seems a pause, but it is in the direction of these things that the whole current sets; it is towards these that "all things work together." I firmly believe that the natural tendency of all moral currents, apart from God's grace, is downwards. Apart from *that*, we shall always grow worse: with it, we shall always grow better. Believe me, my reader, when I say, that if all your life and all your lot be not hallowed in all of the Blessed Spirit, you may be sure that you are breathing a moral atmosphere which wants just the precious ozone that is needful to true health and life. And if you have not, penitently and

humbly, confided your soul to the Saviour, you may know that you are drifting with a current which is certainly bearing you on towards all that is evil and all that is woful. It is sad to see the poor little pale and sickly children of some dark, stifling close in a large city; poor little things who never breathed the free country air; who are living in an unwholesome atmosphere within doors and without, in which they are pining, and growing up weak and nerveless: but it is more sad to see the immortal soul stunted, emaciated, and distorted, through the unhealthy moral air it breathes. It must have been a

misericordant sight, the little boat with the man in it asleep, drifting smoothly and swiftly along, beyond human reach, towards the tremendous cataclysm: but it is more miserable, if we saw it rightly, to see a human soul, in spiritual sleep, drifting day by day towards the fearful plunge into final woe. Let us pray, my reader, for both of us; that God would be with us by his Spirit, and keep us in all ways that we go: that in all our life we may breathe the Atmosphere of His presence; and by the Current of all our life be brought nearer to Himself!

A. K. H. B.

JUSTINUS KERNER.—The circle of poets who, born and living in the valleys of Suabia, and united by the bands of personal friendship, formed, about half a century ago, what has since been called "Die schwäbische Dichterschule" (they themselves always protesting against the appellation), is being thinned more and more. Of its three leading members, Gustav Schwab, the youngest, died in 1852; and now the grave has closed over his elder companion, Justinus Kerner, while venerable Ludwig Uhland, poetically the most important of the number, stood sorrowing by, expressly come from Tübingen to do the last honors to the friend and brother-poet. Kerner, born at Ludwigsburg in 1786, died on the 21st of February last, thus attaining an age of nearly seventy-six years. His death took place in the same rural abode at Weinsberg, in the shade of the ruined castle of Weibertreu, and surmounted by his own old Gartenturm (during the Peasants' War the prison of Count von Helfenstein) which had harbored him, in the midst of his happy family circle, for these last forty years. This sweet and truly poetical retreat, we are sure, will long live in the memory of the many visitors from all parts of Europe, who travelled thither as to a sort of Suabian Mecca, and all of whom—crowned heads among the number—left it impressed with the peace and poesy of the place, as well as the amiability and hospitality of its inmates:—

"Wer ist, der nicht gerührt
Vom Hauch, den er gespürt,
Aus deinem Hause schied?
Der nicht aus neuen Zeichen
Den Geist, den ewig reichen,
Der Welt und Herz bewegt, errieth?"

"Was anpre nur gesungen,
Das hast du dir errungen:
Den magischen Pallast.
Das Wild sucht deine Halle,
Das Pferd in deinem Stalle
Fühlt nicht der Jahre Last,

Und Pilger aller Zonen
Mit warmem Danke lohnd
Die freundlich dargebotne Rast."

Of the many poet-visitors who found there a hearty welcome, and some of them, as it were, even a second home, let us only name Wilhelm Müller, Nicolaus Lenau, and Count Alexander von Württemberg. That, for a certain time, Kerner's house was also the refuge of the "Seherin von Prevorst," and thus became the cradle and the centre of modern spiritualism, is a well-known fact. We think we are not much amiss, if we trace back the whole of spirit-rapping, table-turning, etc., to this secluded spot among the vines of the Neckar. Kerner's book on the *Seeress* created a deep interest among our excitable cousins beyond the Atlantic; and the impulse given by it soon manifested itself in the mediums, animated pieces of furniture, and other "Strange Stories," which, with the returning tide, have overflowed Europe. We have nothing to say in excuse of Kerner with regard to this mental aberration,—we cannot call it otherwise,—but we feel bound to add, that he at least acted in good faith, being thoroughly convinced of the truth of his own theories. Yet we believe that his reason and his science (he was a highly-reputed physician, the *Oberamtsarzt* of his district) now and then brought him into conflict with his belief; and it was in such moments that the excellent humor which was one of his distinguishing qualities, and which in such cases did not spare even himself, helped him out of the difficulty. His humorous little drama of "Der Bärenhäuter im Salzbad" owes its origin to this sort of self-mockery. His poetry, for the greatest part, is full of deep feeling, though sometimes not without a certain weakness and pusillanimity. Many of his poems will live; and so will his memory,—that of a good, true, amiable, and many-gifted man. A simple monument is to be raised to him among the ruins and the Æolian harps of the Weibertreu.—*Athenæum*.

A SOLDIER'S LETTER,
AND A WOMAN'S ANSWER.

HOSPITAL, April —.

I WRITE with a great deal of pain, dear girl—
I've not been able before since the fight—
And my brain is still so much in a whirl,
That I can tell you but little to-night.
I'm wounded!—don't start—'tis not very bad,
Or at least it might be worse; so I said,
When I thought of you, "I'm sure she'll be
glad
To know that I'm only wounded—not dead."

I've lost my left arm—there! now you know
all!

A Minié ball shattered it, and I fell;
The last that I heard was our Captain's call,
Until—the rest is too painful to tell.
I've had throughout the most excellent care,
And am doing finely, the surgeon says;
So well, indeed, that the prospect is fair
For a homeward trip before many days.

But I've something else, dear Mary, to say,
And I'd say it if it cost me my life;
I've thought of it well—there's no other way—
You're released from your promise to be my
wife!

You'll think me foolish at first; then you'll
think
Of the loose, armless coat-sleeve at my side;
And your proud and sensitive heart will shrink
From the thought of being a cripple's bride.

'Tis a bitter struggle to give you up,
For I've loved you more than ever of late;
But down to its dregs I've drained the cup,
And I'm calm, though my heart is desolate.
I'm coming home, and of course we must meet;
My darling, this once, one boon I implore—
Let us still be friends—for that will be sweet,
Since now, alas! we can be nothing more.

SWEET HOME, April —.

My Robert, how brave and noble you are!
Too brave and too noble, I know, for me;
But you've too little faith in me by far
If you believe that I want to be free.
I'm not released from my promise—no, no!
'Twas never so sacred to me before;
If you could but know how I've longed to go
And watch by your side, you'd doubt me no
more.

I read your name in the terrible list,
But the tears froze back that sprang to my
eye;
And a fearful pain, that I could not resist,
Crushed my heart till I only longed to die.
The blessed tears, by-and-by, came again,
And I felt, as you in your letter said,
A feeling of gladness, 'mid all my pain,
That Robert was only wounded—not dead.

Oh, darling! to think you have suffered so,
And I all these long, weary miles away;
You've needed me very often, I know,
While I could do nothing but hope and pray.

But hardest of all is the bitter thought
That you have been suffering so much for
me;
Poor Robert! your manly letter has brought
A strange mixture of joy and misery.

But you're coming home to my arms and heart;
You're right—I am proud and sensitive too;
But I'm only so when we are apart,
And now—I shall only be proud of you!
You're coming home to happiness and rest,
And I wait the moment of blissful calm,
When I shall be held to a Soldier's breast
By a Patriot-Hero's one strong arm!
Blackstone, Mass., April, 1862.

—Harper's Weekly.

MONOSYLLABICS.

THINK not that strength lies in the big round
word,
Or that the brief and plain must needs be
weak.
To whom can this be true who once has heard
The cry for help, the tongue that all men
speak,
When want or woe or fear is in the throat,
So that each word gasped out is like a shriek
Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange wild
note,
Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a
strength
Which dies if stretched too far or spun too fine,
Which has more height than breadth, more
depth than length.
Let but this force of thought and speech be
mine,
And he that will may make the sleek fat
phrase,
Which glows and burns not, though it gleam
and shine—
Light, but no heat—a flash, but not a blaze!

Nor is it mere strength that the short word
boasts;
It serves of more than fight or storm to tell,
The roar of waves that clash on rock-bound
coasts,
The crash of tall trees when the wild winds
swell,
The roar of guns, the groans of men that die
On blood-stained fields. It has a voice as
well
For them that far off on their sick beds lie;
For them that weep, for them that mourn the
dead;
For them that laugh and dance and clap the
hand;
To joy's quick step, as well as grief's slow
tread,
The sweet plain words we learned at first keep
time,
And though the theme be sad, or gay, or
grand,
With each, with all, these may be made to chime,
In thought or speech or song, or prose or
rhyme.

—By the late J. Addison Alexander.

From Chambers's Journal.

A NON-COMBATANT HERO.

A POLITE French gentleman who had meant no harm was once knocked down by an ancient English civilian because he had called him a non-combatant. "No Briton," urged the latter (in extenuation of his hasty conduct), "no matter what his profession or his age, should ever be called a non-combatant, or anything like it, and least of all by a Frenchman." Our venerable countryman had sinew and humor upon his side of the argument, but his reasoning was very defective. Some of the bravest men the world has produced have been non-combatants, and some of the most heroic deeds in its history have been performed, not by the destroyers of their species, but by the healers and preservers thereof. There was not a more valiant work done in all the Crimean war than that undertaken by Surgeon Thomson after Alma. There was not a more dauntless man in the whole Grand Army of Napoleon than its surgeon-in-chief, Baron Larrey.

This gentleman, when attached to Kellerman's brigade in 1792, first exhibited his credentials as Mitigator of War in his invention of the Flying Ambulances, which bore the wounded rapidly away, instead of leaving them to linger on, as of old, in agony upon the battle-field. The employment of ambulances is not, however, at all times practicable, and even when it is so, there are dangers and difficulties in the path of the army-surgeon, such as cannot be possibly imagined by us who live at home at ease, but must be described by one who experienced them. In the *Memoirs of Baron Larrey*,* we possess perhaps the most trustworthy, as well as the most striking account of how it goes with the wounded, and that (for he ever tended friend and foe with equal care) on both sides, in the bloody arbitrament of war. History has long concerned herself with the victors and the vanquished only, and not without reason; since, to receive a severe wound, in the case of a common soldier, was, under the old régime, almost certainly to die. It was only the chiefs that were much attended to, or who "lived to fight another day" at all. Yet in Larrey's time, so much had these things been

changed for the better, that he sent forth Napoleon from Moscow with more than one hundred thousand able-bodied men, who had entered that city, fatal as it was in other respects, with only ninety thousand combatants. The means, however, by which patients are recovered in warfare are often strange enough, and the remedies applied not a little violent. In the woodless wastes of Egypt, the sick were warmed at night by fires which were made of the bones of the dead. When the army got to Cairo, it fell into the hideous embraces of the plague, whose only merit was that it extinguished, like death itself, all other diseases. When the plague ceased, fatigues and privations under a burning sun excited liver complaint, which degenerated into abscesses so terrible, that it was sometimes found necessary to plunge some sharp instrument into the stomach, in order to give free course to supuration. The lesser diseases of that Egyptian campaign were leprosy, caught from infected mattresses and unclean food, ophthalmia, scurvy, and elephantiasis. Dark, indeed, was the side of Bellona's shield which it was the life-long fate of Surgeon Larrey to contemplate. The personal safety, too, of this non-combatant was jeopardized in every engagement. His amputations were performed amid a shower of bullets, and in expectation of the charge of hostile cavalry. "Among the wounded was General Silly, whose knee was ground by a bullet. Larrey, perceiving that fatal results might ensue unless the limb was amputated at once, proposed amputation. The general consented to the operation, which was performed under the enemy's fire in the space of three minutes. But lo! the English cavalry suddenly near their side. What, then, was to become of the French surgeon and his patient? 'I had scarce time,' said Larrey, 'to place the wounded officer on my shoulders, and to carry him rapidly away towards our army, which was in full retreat. I spied a series of ditches, some of them planted with caper bushes, across which I passed, while the cavalry were obliged to go by a more circuitous route in that intersected country. Thus I had the happiness to reach the rear-guard of our army before this corps of dragoons. At length I arrived with this honorably wounded officer at Alexandria, where I completed his cure.'"

* Renshaw. London, 1861.

On many battle-fields, the cold was so intense that the instruments requisite for the operations fell from the powerless hands of the army-surgeons; after others, nothing could be procured but horse-flesh to make soup for the exhausted patients, while their only tureens were the cuirasses of the fallen. At Smolensk, where all supplies and stores had been burned by the retreating Russians, Larrey, fertile in expedients, discovered a hoard of archives, and substituted paper for lint, and the thick parchment for splints. His wounded were then upwards of ten thousand in number, and almost all the town in conflagration. At Eylau, these poor fellows were well-nigh meeting with a second calamity, which would without doubt have destroyed the whole of them. "While I was operating," says he, "or directing operations, I heard on all sides of me the most pressing appeals to me from the sufferers. To the doleful moans of these intrepid soldiers succeeded, after the operation, a prodigious and almost inexplicable calm, along with a kind of internal satisfaction, which they expressed by testimonies of the most lively gratitude. They appeared no longer occupied by their personal evils; they made vows for the preservation of our emperor and the success of our arms; finally, they mutually encouraged each other to bear patiently the different operations which their wounds rendered necessary. It was in the midst of all the obstacles which a hostile locality and a rigorous temperature were presenting, that some of the most delicate and difficult operations were performed successfully. Just at the moment when a veritable consolation was diffusing itself in the soul of every wounded man, an unexpected effort made by the right wing of the enemy to outflank our left, precisely at the point where the ambulances were stationed, was calculated to spread trouble among these distressed men. Already some who were able to march had taken flight; others were making vain efforts to follow them, and escape this unexpected attack. We, however, were their prop and support; we were determined to die rather than to seek ignominious safety. I expressed forcibly to all the wounded who remained the resolution which I had taken not to abandon my post; I assured them that, whatever might be the result of this alarm, which to me appeared false, they had nothing

to fear for their life. All the members of my own department rallied round me, and swore not to abandon me.

Presently, an impetuous charge, purposely made upon the enemy which had been threatening us, in midst of dense whirlwinds of snow, prevented the event so dreaded by our wounded men. Calm was re-established, and it became possible for the medical officers to continue uninterruptedly their operations. All the more serious wounds of the Imperial Guard and a great part of the line were treated and operated on during the first twelve hours; then only did any of the surgeons begin to take rest. We passed the remainder of the night on the ice and snow around the fire of the bivouac of the ambulances. Never had there been so hard a day for me: it had been hardly possible for me to restrain my tears in those moments when I was endeavoring to sustain the courage of my soldier-patients."

A more Catholic-hearted man than Larrey never breathed; a fellow-creature had only to need his professional assistance, and whether Englishman, Austrian, or Russian, he was his friend at once. He held that a surgeon had no enemies except disease and death, and on one occasion almost perished of a malignant fever contracted from some countrymen of our own who were prisoners to the French in Spain.

With the armies of his beloved master, Napoleon, Larrey visited in turn almost every country in Europe, of each of which he has something novel to say, since his views of all things is taken from so unusual a stand-point; but the most striking of all his experiences is without doubt his narrative of the campaign in Russia. During that awful expedition, the surgeon-in-chief of the Grand Army went on foot. Cold, he had convinced himself, was only the predisposing cause of frost-bite, and the heat which succeeds the cold the real source of mischief. Those who rode, upon arriving motionless at a bivouac, experienced an irrepressible desire to warm themselves, and on approaching a fire contracted gangrene in their half-frozen limbs. In all other countries through which the French passed as invaders, it was Larrey's custom, upon evacuating a town, to leave a letter for the medical chief of the enemy, commending to his care each of his own unhappy patients as

were too ill to be moved; and in no case was this confidence found to be misplaced. But in Russia every town was set on fire before Napoleon reached it, and consumed almost to the last house before he departed. Where the Grand Army looked for abundance, and rest, and shelter, they found nothing but flames. The hope of reaching their great goal, Moscow, however, animated them to an extraordinary degree, notwithstanding that the four hundred thousand fighting men who had crossed the Niemen were reduced to less than a quarter of that number.

"At length, on the 14th of September, on reaching an eminence in the road, the advanced-guard suddenly caught sight of Moscow. As all the battalions of the army reached that part of the road, they halted, and the sound of 'Moscow' reverberated through their ranks. It was a moment of intoxication. After a short halt, they continued their onward course; and as the old city of the czars of Muscovy became brighter and clearer, the joy of the French soldiers increased. Murat, at the head of the cavalry, galloped forward, and concluded a truce with the enemy for the evacuation of Moscow. The whole French army soon afterwards began to enter the gates of that city. The French soldiers dispersed themselves through the town, and gazed at its novelties. The houses were richly furnished, the churches were profuse in ornament, and the palaces seemed stored with the wealth of ages. Afterwards, some of them climbed to the summit of the Kremlin. From that spot, they looked down upon a city which in extent seemed as large as Paris, Vienna, and Berlin together. Beneath them, in survey, were fifteen hundred palaces, with gardens and parks, and thousands of houses of a perfectly new architecture, tiled or roofed with polished iron of various devices. From the midst of these abodes arose hundreds of churches and innumerable steeples. Conceptions the most eccentric, of Byzantine, Tartar, and Armenian architecture, had there raised edifices, with twisted columns in front of them, and also produced a variety of contour and painting. Many of the houses were of colored wood; but the colors were unmatched and incongruous. Then the silvered and gilded cupolas of the principal churches, in reflecting the rays of the sun, gave to this panorama much that was dazzling as well as new to French eyes. Commanding and overlooking all, by its gilded roof of immense height, and by its towers almost laden with steeples, with its walls

carved or sculptured like garlands, the Kremlin, in its imposing grandeur, appeared like the father and protector of the old Muscovite city."

In this Kremlin, the citadel of the capital, the abode of the czars, which contained their treasure, the sacred images of the Greek religion, and the mortal remains of the sovereigns laid out in funeral chapels, adorned with gold and gems, Napoleon took up his quarters. His soldiers, who had long been strangers to a bed, that night slept on soft couches in mansions of the noble and wealthy. They were dreaming of enriching themselves by the spoil of those luxuriant but forsaken abodes, when the torches of the incendiaries—the felons who had been liberated from prison, and left behind for this dread purpose—were applied to the holy city. The gales of the equinox acted like a bellows on the rising conflagration. The polished steel roofs of the buildings soon became red hot, balloons of fire drifted to and fro, and the air resounded with the falling of walls and springing of mines. Napoleon clung to the spot as long as possible; but at length the increasing fury of the flames rendered it quite untenable, and he removed—not without great peril in passing through the burning streets—to Pétrowskoïé, a château of Peter the Great, about four miles from the city. For three days and nights, the fire raged, consuming the entire capital except the Kremlin, the churches, and a few of the large stone houses. Napoleon surveyed the scene from his château, and was overheard by Larrey to exclaim: "This event is the presage of a long train of disasters." As soon as possible, the emperor returned to the place where Moscow had stood. "The camps which he traversed," says M. de Segur, "in order to arrive at the Kremlin, offered a singular aspect. They were on thick and cold mud, in the midst of fields. Here the soldiers were warming themselves by igniting furniture of acacia, windows of handsome framework, and doors of rich gilding. Around these fires, on a litter of damp straw, which was badly sheltered by some planks, one saw the soldiers and officers, soiled with mud and blackened with smoke, sitting in arm-chairs, or sleeping on sofas of silk. At their feet were stretched or heaped up shawls of cashmere, the most rare furs of Siberia, and also stuffs of gold

of Persia. Between the camps and the town, one met crowds of soldiers dragging or trailing their booty, or chasing before them, as beasts of burden, moujiks bent under the weight of the pillage of their capital, for the fire showed near twenty thousand inhabitants, unperceived till then, in this immense city. They went to shelter themselves with the wreck of their goods near our fires. They lived pell-mell with our soldiers, protected by some, and tolerated or scarce remarked by others. There were even about ten thousand soldiers of the enemy. During several days, they wandered in the midst of us, free, and some of them still armed."

Having deferred as long as possible the evacuation of Moscow, on account of the loss of prestige which he knew must result from any retrograde movement, and despairing of any conditions of peace from Alexander, Napoleon commenced his retreat. The one hundred and three thousand men who yet remained to him carried with them an immense plunder, beside that famous and gigantic cross snatched from the tower of the great Ivan, which the emperor fondly hoped to see erected on the dome of the Invalides at Paris. They were also accompanied by many French families who had long resided in Russia, but were now apprehensive of being left behind. The dreadful story of this retreat has been told again and again. Before the French could effect their passage across the Beresina, the Russians arrived in enormous force, and began to fire upon "the division of General Partoureaux, the soldiers of which division immediately wished to cross the bridge all at once. The conveyances clashed with each other. Some of the unfortunate men were crushed, while others, losing all spirit, threw themselves into the stream; some opened a cruel way for themselves by massacring all who obstructed their passage. Shrieks of women, cries of despair, roar of cannon, noise of explosions, and a variety of sounds, were all heard together. A certain number, in the abyss of despair, sat on the banks half stupified, and, after gazing as if they scarce saw, died of prostration. There was throughout a frightful mixture of imprecations, of clashings, and of strugglings; thence arose indescribable disorder, and a breaking of the overloaded bridge. The Russian army approached, and

with its formidable artillery tore the ranks of the French mob of soldiers." In this immense disaster, the surgeon-in-chief, after having crossed over with the Imperial Guard, "discovered that requisites for the sick and wounded of his countrymen had been left on the opposite bank. With equal humanity and heroism he recrossed the stream; and hardly had he done so, when he was surrounded by a wildly excited crowd. He was almost suffocated in the midst of it. It is here that one may find proof of that unbounded affection with which Larrey had inspired the soldiers with whom he was serving. No sooner was he recognized, then he was carried with astonishing rapidity in the arms of the soldiers across the river. On all parts was heard the cry nearly in these words: "Let us save him who saved us!"

The sufferings of the remnant of the Grand Army became now extreme; neither rank nor nationality could be recognized in their diminished columns. Those rags which had been uniforms were scorched by the fires of the bivouacs, and their feet were wrapped up in bits of cloth instead of shoes and stockings. Even their very ages were confounded, for the beards of youth and age were equally whitened by the hoar-frost, and all went stumbling on in apparent decrepitude. So fatal was the cold, that of the twelve thousand men forming the twelfth division of the army, all had perished between Wilna and Ochmiana save three hundred and fifty! "At Miedneski, the cold was so great that Larrey found it was 28 degrees on the thermometer of Reaumur, which was suspended to his coat button. It seemed a region in which all life died, death lived; for, as the army of skeletons passed onwards, they observed numbers of dead birds, which, doubtless in their flight towards the centre of Europe, had been overtaken by the winter, and had fallen at once, stiffened by the cold, on the very track which the retreating French were now pursuing. The silence of their march was broken occasionally by the weak voice of some comrade as he sank, never to rise, on the snow-clad earth." Even the Russians themselves fared little better. The hundred and twenty thousand men of Kutusoff melted down to thirty-five thousand; and the fifty thousand of Wittgenstein to fifteen thousand. Nay, so benumbed and stupified were these natives by the cold of

their own winter, that they were incapable of distinguishing the French prisoners who marched in the middle of their columns. Many of these were so audacious as to attack isolated parties of Russians, and make themselves masters of their arms and uniforms, after which they would join the enemy's ranks without being detected.

Larrey's iron constitution endured all the hardships of this campaign without much detriment; the spirit was ever willing with him, and the flesh was not weak. His moral courage, too, was fully equal to his physical. Long ago at Esslingen, when the officers of the staff complained to Napoleon of their horses having been shot by command of the surgeon-in-chief, he had been summoned to the emperor's presence. "What!" said the latter, "have you ventured, on your own responsibility, to dispose of my officers' horses for food for your wounded?" "Yes," answered Larrey, nor did he add another word to that monosyllable. For this reply, his

master who was not of the silver-fork school of sovereigns, created him a baron of the empire.

As no man ever merited honor and promotion more than Larrey, so none was ever less grudging the possession of them. The name of this non-combatant hero is engraved on the stone of the *Arc de Triomphe* with those of the illustrious soldiers of the Republic and the Empire. His statue stands in the Court of Honor in the military hospital of the Val de Grâce at Paris. His works, forming the connecting link between the surgery of the last age and the present, are also themselves a monument. Finally, there is this noble record of him in the will of Napoleon his master, who had an eye for an honest man, although he could scarcely himself be classed in the category of such; "I bequeath to the surgeon-in-chief of the French army, Larrey, 100,000 francs. *He is the most virtuous man I have ever known.*"

BETS ON THE COMET.—We ought to have published long ago the propositions of the Urbana (Ill.) *Constitution* concerning the Comet. They have been extensively quoted and credited to a paper which stole them from the *Constitution*, and, late as it is, we'll do what we can to set the matter right. Zimmerman, after observing "the critter" carefully with the instruments of the Urbana Brass Band, comes to the conclusion:—

1st. The comet will not strike the earth; but—

2d. If it does strike, it will never do it a second time.

In case, however, any gentleman holds opinions different from the above and is willing to back his views to a limited extent, in order to arrive at the truth in this momentous matter, we hereby make the following

PROPOSITIONS.

1st. We will wager \$20,000, more or less, that if the comet offers to strike, we will dodge before it does it; in other words, that it can't be brought to the scratch.

2d. A like sum that if it does strike, it will be knocked higher nor a kite.

3d. Twenty-five times the above amounts that in case the comet strikes, it won't budge the earth six inches by actual measurement.

4th. A like amount that after the comet strikes, its tail drops.

5th. An optional sum that the earth can

knock the comet further than the comet can knock the earth, nine times out of eleven.

6th. That after the comet gets through striking the earth, it will never want to strike anybody else.

These propositions are intended to cover the case of any gentleman on this globe, or on the comet, or elsewhere.

All wagers to be decided by the judges of the Supreme Court.

Money to be deposited in the Banks of Newfoundland.

Time of striking and other arrangements to be fixed by the parties.

Applicants for bets have a right to select any comet they choose.

SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.—What would our Scottish friends say to the following specimen of American manners?—

"The town [New Orleans] is liberally supplied with churches of all denominations. I went one Sunday to a Presbyterian church, and was much struck on my entry at seeing all the congregation reading newspapers. Seating myself in a pew, I found a paper lying alongside of me, and, taking it up, I discovered it was a religious paper, full of anecdotes and experiences, etc., and was supplied *gratis* to the congregation."—*Land of the Slave and the Free*, by Hon. Henry A. Murray. 1855. Vol. i. p. 261. —*Notes and Queries*. K. P. D. E.

From The Spectator, 29 March.

THE DUEL OF THE IRONSIDES.

WHATEVER the result of the existing contest, whether the South achieve independence only to perish from the obstinate retention of slavery, or the North conquer the South only to find in her an American Ireland, or the Union is restored free throughout her dominion, with a strong central authority and a burdensome list of taxes, one point is sufficiently proved. The Federal Government will emerge from the contest a most formidable fighting power. True to their English origin, her people blundered at first, rushed as it were blindfold to war without ever counting its cost, with an organization which crumbled to pieces at the first serious strain, and with leaders who had been selected for anything rather than tried capacity. The first battle was a defeat; the first naval efforts melancholy evidence that America had no fleet adequate to her general position on earth, or to the immediate work to be done. The generals proved incompetent, the officers ignorant, the men indisposed to discipline, the matériel wretchedly incomplete. But with these English defects, the Federalists displayed also the English virtues—a tenacity which defeat could not disturb, and a resourcefulness which seemed to become more ample as the incentive of hope disappeared. The nation sent half a million of volunteers into the field, answered disaster by fresh supplies, and waited for the turn in the tide which always comes to the strong. It has arrived at last. The defeats sustained in the West have been answered by a series of victories, often grossly exaggerated, sometimes made up by editors, but which have restored military supremacy throughout at least three great States. The wretched horde who fled at Manassas have been drilled, and rationed, and disciplined into effective soldiers, and on the 10th March General McClellan passed the Long Bridge out of Washington at the head of an army which the first European general might be proud to command, two hundred thousand effectives, whom even a practised critic like Mr. Russell admits to be really soldiers, splendidly equipped with artillery and means of carriage, and full of courage and exultation. It is quite possible that they will not accomplish all which the exulting North believes to be within their

power. The retreat of the Confederates from Manassas opens the gates of Virginia, but armies as vast and as well-appointed have ere this been stopped by the mud, and the necessity of sufficient supplies. The South proper, a territory still untouched, is half as large as Europe within the Vistula, and *if the Confederates intend to fight on*, a conquering army may march unopposed till enormous expense again compels its chiefs to withdraw. But, allowing for all those possibilities, the great fact must still remain; the American people, betrayed in the Cabinet and defeated in the field, without generals, and with doubtful statesmen, with their coinage turned to paper, and their population unused to war, have raised an army so strong that it may yet be able to subjugate eight millions of equally brave, and far better organized men. They have commenced a campaign *after* defeat on a scale which seemed monstrous when Napoleon tried it after ten years of victory.

And now, as if this were not sufficient, it has fallen to them to test, for the first time, the power of science as applied to the means of maritime war. They, but yesterday told that their fleet was powerless even for a blockade, have as it were in a day decided the problem of naval warfare. The South, with an energy which, were it not directed against human freedom, might extort the admiration of Europe, have found in science a power which has overmatched all the advantages of wealth and constructive means. With their ports still blockaded, and their navy only a remnant saved from the enemy's fleet, they have constructed a ship which, it is not too much to say, is an overmatch for the whole of the force which blockades their coast. It is not only possible but probable that had not the Federalists also called in the aid of science, the *Merrimac* might have destroyed the entire blockading squadron.

As it was she destroyed one sailing frigate, compelled another to strike, riddled a steam frigate with balls, smashed a gunboat with a shot, stood the fire of heavy shore batteries without injury, fought a floating iron steam battery yard-arm to yard-arm for three hours, and finally steamed away either untouched, or only with injuries which may be repaired. On the other hand, the *Monitor*, Mr. Ericsson's vessel, engaged this giant "six times her size," fought her

for three hours without losing a man, and finally drove her off, preserving in the act the whole of the wooden fleet. The combat resembled nothing so much as the contests described by Froissart, battles in which one mail-clad knight puts to flight an army of meaner foes, and is only stopped when he meets an opponent as invulnerable as himself. No scene so picturesque has occurred since naval warfare commenced, and even this feature is lost in its terrible suggestiveness. If the apparent is also the true result of the combat, naval war is revolutionized, our wooden fleets are not worth their keep, and we must discover means of despatching iron ships even to distant stations. The battle, indecisive on one point, seems to have cleared up at least three doubtful questions. Wooden sailing ships, however well armed, are powerless against iron steamers. Their only defence is their armament, and this, however heavy, they have not the time to use. Their first broadside makes no impression, and before a second can be delivered they may be cut in two. The iron steamer can run them down. The first stroke of the *Merrimac's* beak laid the side of the *Cumberland* open, and though a second was given, it is clear from the testimony of the *Cumberland's* men that it was not required. So patent was the impossibility of escape, that the *Congress*, a vessel of fifty guns, surrendered while still untouched by the prow. What the fate of the *Minnesota* might have been had she not run aground, it is difficult to guess. She is a steam frigate, but though she might not have been run down, she could have made no impression upon the *Merrimac's* iron sides, and a counter-charge would, perhaps, have been scarcely of more effect; for—and the fact is of the last importance—the charge of the *Merrimac*, so deadly to the *Cumberland*, had no effect on the *Monitor*. The fact of the charge, which struck her full in the side, is mentioned by all eye-witnesses; but her sides did not give way, while her enormous weight saved her from careening over. Then, we hold it as clear, that although ships all of iron may be better than plated vessels, still, plating increases the strength of a ship in an almost inestimable ratio. The *Merrimac* is only a common, though large frigate, cut down, plated, and sheltered by a roof of solid iron, sloping just like a thatch, so as to render

boarding impossible. Such a vessel, so plated, may not be the ultimate result of science, but if such a steamer could reach, say the Indian waters, no wooden squadron, however powerful, would afford the slightest security. She would destroy them one by one without danger of reprisal, bombard a port, say, for example, Bombay, without regard to land batteries, and pick and choose among merchantmen without fear of their convoy, their numbers, or any armament they could bear. That palpable result silences, we hope forever, the objections still raised by old admirals to expenditure on the new vessels, and the argument that plated vessels must always be mere patrols, and wood still form the staple material of a fleet required to serve at a distance. The result of the action, moreover, though it does not prove the superiority of the cupola plan, must be taken as evidence in its favor. The *Merrimac* was apparently pierced, the *Monitor* certainly was not, the shot, delivered from 100-pound guns, within fifty yards, only making an indentation on the round tower. The *Monitor*, moreover, cannot be boarded, the boarders finding no ingress, and being exposed to the fire of the guns in the turret, which can be directed so as to sweep the deck. Then it is manifest that steering power, in which our iron ships are said to be so deficient, is an important element in success. The *Monitor*, which steers easily, went round and round the *Merrimac*, planting regular blows upon the most convenient spot. Indeed, the only point on which no fresh light is thrown by the combat is the sea-going capacity of the iron sides. The battle took place in a creek, the *Monitor* only coasted round from New York, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether the cupolaed vessel, from her excessive depth in the water, could encounter a heavy wind in the Atlantic without instant destruction. Enough remains, however, to prove that vessels built like the *Monitor* are terrible instruments of defence; that Admiral Milne's fleet, for example, might, had the war broken out, have been assailed by an enemy against which his noblest vessels would have been powerless, for which, indeed, only the *Warrior* would have been an equal match.

It would be hard indeed if a revolution so great tended only to human slaughter,

and the result of the combat may lead to at least two pleasant conclusions. One is that the introduction of iron tends directly to diminish the bloodshed consequent on every naval engagement. A vessel may indeed be destroyed with all hands, but the ordinary slaughter of naval warfare, the deaths from musketry and splinters, from boarding, and from the explosion of shells, would appear to be at an end. The other is, that a free people, however imperfectly organized, is never a powerless foe; that however unprepared or unready, it is sure to discover in its millions of brains working cordially for defence, the means of successful resistance, if not of ultimate victory. We know nothing more wonderful than the fact that at the very moment when England believed that war with the North was an assault on the weak, a Swedish speculator had nearly completed a boat able, single-handed, to destroy a blockading squadron. Despotism can organize, but it cannot create, and even for war there are no resources like those latent in the brains and hearts of a people resolute to be free.

From The Saturday Review, 29 March.

THE BATTLE OF NEWPORT NEWS.

NOT more than a year ago, the *Times* dwelt with much emphasis on the fact that the Americans had steadily refused to avail themselves of the new-fangled device of iron-plated ships. That a people so adventurous and skilful in mechanical appliances should have pronounced the new invention a chimera, was supposed to be a serious ground for doubting the wisdom of the course which France had initiated and England sluggishly followed. No one could then have imagined that the first real test of armor-plated ships in actual warfare would be furnished by America. It is only within a few weeks that either of the belligerents has had a plated ship ready for sea; and, as if to supply the crucial experiment which was wanting to build up the confidence of our naval architects, the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* have exhibited their powers of attack and defence, and proved that even imperfect specimens (as they probably are) of their class are quite capable of sweeping from the ocean whole fleets of the old wooden liners.

So far as mere experimental trials could suffice to do so, the qualities of our *Warrior* have been fully tested. Fac-similes of her plates have been battered at short ranges by 100-pounder guns, and the ship herself has proved her speed and her sea-worthiness under the most trying circumstances. Still, Shoeburyness and the Bay of Biscay failed to bring conviction home to the minds of many who would be satisfied with nothing less than an actual engagement, such as the last American accounts report for our instruction. One important power of destruction possessed by these vessels—that of running down an enemy's ship—has been falling so much into discredit that, in several of our more recent ships, the beak has been abandoned. There was, it is true, nothing but theory on either side; but while the advocates of the new, or rather the revived, mode of warfare proved to demonstration that nothing made of wood could possibly resist the shock of an iron vessel of several thousand tons weight, the cautious doubters, who have had more influence with the Admiralty, insisted that the attacking ship would suffer as severely as her opponent, that masts would go by the board, engines would be torn to pieces, and screws would be disabled, by the collision which might send an enemy to the bottom of the sea.

The battle of Newport News has done much to clear up these doubts. The trial was not one very favorable to the system of armor-plating. The *Merrimac* was a wooden frigate, not built to carry the load of iron under which she now has to stagger. She is said to be sunk so deep in the water that the experiment of casing her was at first thought to be a failure, and it is pretty certain that she would fare but ill in a storm on the Atlantic. With all these disadvantages, she has proved herself capable, in smooth water, of destroying an adversary with terrible facility. The story of her engagement with the *Cumberland*, a powerful frigate armed with 100-pounder guns, is simple enough. She steamed up, received the fire of the enemy with perfect indifference, fired a couple of shots, and then dashed into the frigate's side and left an opening on the water-line of seven feet in diameter. So little does she seem to have suffered from the shock that a second blow of the beak was administered without delay, and the *Cumber-*

land straightway began to fill and in a short time sank. Having crushed one adversary, the *Merrimac*, apparently uninjured, gave battle to another, which had no choice but to surrender, and from all that can be gathered of the details of the affair, there is no reason to doubt that the iron monster could have destroyed a score of wooden frigates, had such a fleet been there to oppose her.

New York was, naturally enough, in the utmost excitement and alarm at the first report of the disaster; and so completely was the balance of the naval power supposed to be turned by a single ship against the overwhelming preponderance of the Northern navy, that the ignominious and ruinous project of destroying the harbor of New York was urgently pressed upon the authorities. If the *Merrimac* were capable of an Atlantic voyage, there was really nothing extravagant in the supposition that she might annihilate the whole blockading squadron in detail, and finish her exploits by steaming past the batteries of Sandy Hook and shelling New York at her leisure. The opportune arrival of the *Monitor*, however, gave the first check to the Southern triumph. The two champion ships seemed practically to represent in themselves the rival navies, and for the moment, if not forever, a single iron ship counted for more in the salvation of the Federalists than all the fleets with which they have swarmed round the coasts of the South. Whatever the precise result of the single combat was, the meeting of the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* has conclusively established the overwhelming importance of iron-plated vessels. The *Monitor* carried guns far heavier than any that are known in the British navy. But the shots of 200 pound weight which she hurled against the sloping iron roof of the Confederate frigate, sometimes at long ranges, and sometimes at close quarters, for hour after hour, produced no perceptible effect; and when at last the *Merrimac* drew off, it was for the time even doubted whether she had really suffered injury, or whether she was merely trying a ruse to circumvent her impregnable opponent. As for the *Monitor*, she came absolutely scatheless out of the tremendous cannonade of the *Merrimac*. Not a plate was damaged, and not a man was hurt, with the exception of the commander, who received a wound as the penalty of his want of caution in not

keeping his head safely behind the iron bulwarks.

In attack and in defence, these two ships, inferior as they are to the examples of the same class which we already possess, have almost surpassed the expectations of the most confident advocates of iron. The armor-plating principle has finally passed out of the experimental stage; and, now that the supposed cause for hesitation is removed, there is no longer any justification for delay on the part of our Admiralty in completing such a fleet of iron-cased ships as shall secure to this country the naval supremacy which is the condition of her power and existence. As yet our progress has been less rapid than that of France, and after the decisive trial of the American ships we may be sure that not only the Federal and Confederate States, but every European country which pretends to be a naval power, will henceforth concentrate all attention upon the class of vessels which will soon make wooden steam ships as obsolete as sailing frigates have now become. The combined strength of all these navies is the measure of the defence with which England must be prepared, and something far beyond the energy which has yet been shown will be needed to keep the position which belongs to this country. The iron fleet of France alone includes, beside the *Magenta* and *Solferino*, four frigates carrying from thirty to forty guns, and a corvette, all of which might be ready for sea within three months. Besides these, there are on the stocks eleven heavy frigates, six corvettes, a ship specially destined for running-down purposes, and sixty plated gunboats. We have probably the best model of all the armor-plated ships as yet afloat, but the *Warrior* can only be in one place at a time, and in numbers our iron fleet is far below that which France alone has in various stages of preparation. England has the means of building vessels of this description much more rapidly than all the rest of the world combined, and has the strongest motives for outstripping all competitors. There need be no fear now that money so spent will be thrown away, and it will in all probability be found that iron ships, costly as they are, will surpass the old models as much in ultimate economy as in power. Whether this be so or not, they are now ascertained to be

irresistible, and we shall soon learn to leave out all other ships from the accounts of the strength of the navy. The second reconstruction of the fleet within a few years has ceased to be a matter of speculation, and has become an absolute necessity. It will be the cheapest and safest course to recognize the fact at once and to use with promptitude the only means by which the power of England can be maintained.

In some respects, the success of the American ships is almost greater than we could have desired. An impregnable dockyard seems really to have become an impossibil-

ity; for a ship which can bear a close cannonade from the heaviest guns for four or five hours can certainly go anywhere where there is water to float her, in spite even of such forts and batteries as are in course of construction for the defence of Portsmouth and Chatham. For the first time, the art of naval attack seems to have established its superiority over the strongest land defences which can be raised; and until some new plan shall be devised for restoring the balance, the only possible precaution is to secure a timely preponderance in the arm which threatens to sweep all resistance before it.

OF PROPRIETY.

STUDY first propriety . . .
The lamp by whose light young Psyche shall
approach unblamed her Eros.
Verily Truth is as Eve, which was ashamed
being naked;
Wherefore doth Propriety dress her with the
fair foliage of artifice:
And when she is drest, behold! she knoweth
not herself again.
I walked in the Forest; and above me stood
the Yew,
Stood like a slumbering giant, shrouded in im-
penetrable shade;
Then I past into the citizen's garden, and
marked a tree clipt into shape,
(The giant's locks had been shorn by the Delia-
h-shears of Decorum);
And I said, "Surely nature is goodly; but how
much goodlier is Art!"
* * * * *
For verily, O my daughter, the world is a mas-
querade,
And God made thee one thing, that thou might-
est make thyself another:
A maiden's heart is as champagne, ever aspir-
ing and struggling upwards,
And it needeth that its motions be checked
by the silvered cork of Propriety:
He that can afford the price, his be the precious
treasure,
Let him drink deeply of its sweetness, nor
grumble if it tasteth of the cork.

—Verses and Translations.

OF READING.

READ not Milton, for he is dry; nor Shakspeare,
for he wrote of common life;
Nor Scott, for his romances, though fascinating,
are yet intelligible:
Read incessantly thy Burke; that Burke who,
nobler than he of old,
Treateth of the Peer and Peeress, the truly
Sublime and Beautiful:

Likewise study the "creations" of "the Prince
of modern Romance;"
Sigh over Leonard the Martyr, and smile on
Pelham the puppy:
Learn how "love is the dram-drinking of ex-
istence;"
And how we "invoke, in the Gadara of our
still closets,
The beautiful ghost of the Ideal, with the simple
wand of the pen."
Listen how Maltravers and the orphan "forgot
all but love,"
And how Devereux's family chaplain "made
and unmade kings:"
How Eugene Aram, though a thief, a liar, and
a murderer,
Yet, being intellectual, was amongst the nob-
blest of mankind.
So shalt thou live in a world peopled with heroes
and master-spirits;
And if thou canst not realize the Ideal, thou
shalt at least idealize the Real.

—Verses and Translations.

THE statue of the late Alexander Wilson, the
poet and ornithologist, is to be the work of Mr.
John Mossman of Paisley. The model has
been approved; and though about £100 more
are required to complete the subscription, the
sculptor will proceed with his work at once.
Wilson is represented in his walking dress, rest-
ing against a tree, with his gun beside him, and
holding a bird in his hand; a favorite parrot,
that was his companion in his wanderings, is
perched upon his portfolio. This bird once
travelled in his pocket on a journey of a thou-
sand miles. It came to an untimely end at last,
by being drowned in the Gulf of Mexico, to the
great grief of its master.

THE first volume of Mr. Elwin's edition of
the *Life, Letters, and Works of Pope*, is in the
press, and will, we hear, comprise many facts
of high interest never ascertained before.

From The Saturday Review.
FASHIONS.

THE fashion of this world, we are told, passeth away. Times change, empires fall, dresses are altered. The first beginning of all reflective philosophy is to dwell on the mutability and the worthlessness of earthly things. In our day, the reflection has become hackneyed. We have played and sported with the thought that England may some day be a waste and London in ruins, till change no longer seems solemn and imposing. It is only in a general way that we accept as a truth that the things that are will not be. Partly this is because, if we take the mutability of things in its widest sense, it seems not to concern us much. If the universe is perishable, that is only interesting as a philosophic truth or a philosophic guess. We could scarcely, in our most hopeful mood, expect to survive the general frame of things. But there is also another reason why we do not feel as much impressed with change as might be looked for. We cannot tell exactly what things are likely to change, or when, or how. Many things that are supposed likely to last soon fade off, and others that appear the creatures of the hour last on and on. Some of those who have worked hardest and longest for fame, and were thought likely to secure it, are now forgotten or passing rapidly out of memory, while a happy chance has given others a place in the honor of posterity, although they were held by their contemporaries to have done very little to deserve it. Southey, who lived the life of a laborious hermit among the books that were to be the basis of his fame, is an almost unknown author to modern England, while Goldsmith is still a favorite. There are many little things as to which we cannot be sure that what seems the fashion of an hour will soon die off. We cannot always console ourselves with thinking that every bore has its day. A fashion we may be inclined to dislike or despise may appeal strongly to some set of feelings or interests, and may be preserved long after it has been thought doomed. There are many matters as to which it is not at all safe to guess that the change that looks so obvious and near is likely to show itself soon.

Take, for instance, crinoline. If ever a fashion ought to have died out under laugh-

ter and mockery of all sorts, it is the custom of making dresses stick out by artificial means. *Punch* has lived on it in the dull season for years. The shops are full of prints portraying all the difficulties in which the wearers of crinoline and hoops are placed. It is wonderful what class of persons find the prints worth purchasing; but as they are produced in abundance somebody must buy them. Probably it is the same set of people who buy tobacco jars shaped like a lady, and so contrived that the lady lifts up, and her petticoats are found to be full of birds'-eye. Then there have been plenty of excellent moral reasons urged against crinoline. It makes dress very expensive, and it puffs up the female mind with unnecessary vanity. Moralists always hope that the female mind will cease to be vain if the right thing is done or left undone. The fashion has also been subjected to the severest of all trials—that of being vulgarized. There is a story of a Spanish Minister who wished to stop the practice of wearing large slouched hats in Madrid. He thought that a smaller and more open article would be more convenient to the police. An edict was issued that the slouched hats should be discontinued. Madrid was in arms, and the attachment to these shady coverings was declared to be unalterable. The cunning Minister was not to be beaten. He ordered the hangmen and other villainous officials to walk up and down the principal streets, wearing the largest and most conspicuous of all possible slouched hats. This was successful, and rather than dress as hangmen dressed, decent people wore a different sort of hat. Much the same experiment has been tried in England with crinoline. It has been displayed in the most conspicuous proportions, and the most glaring manner, by those women who are to virtuous females what hangmen are to respectable grocers and butchers. But in England the effect has been very different from what happened at Madrid. This appropriation of crinoline has rather increased than diminished the fury of the fashion. Hypocrisy, a vice that has almost died out, was said by Rochefoucauld to be the tribute that vice pays to virtue. Imitation is now the tribute that virtue pays to vice. But crinoline has also stood a more rigorous test, for it has descended to the kitchen, and mistresses look with a jealous eye on the mimicry of their

maids. It certainly is a wonderful sight to see a slatternly girl strip herself in order to do a door-step, and then resume her iron cage when the hour that may bring the butcher-boy has arrived. Why is it that crinoline has survived all these dangers, and that, although its proportions are not quite so outrageous, it is still the fashion, and likely to keep so? Simply because—if, at least, we speak of crinoline proper, and not of the cage and hoop abominations—it is really becoming. The female form is much more graceful when it does not appear to go sheer down, like Mrs. Noah in a cheap Ark. Crinoline is vexatious and expensive, and occasionally absurd; but it does effect something that is wanted. Of course, the fashion will be altered in a hundred ways, and the mechanical ingenuity of the human mind will hit on a vast series of improvements in the apparatus. But to the end of time women must either dress sheer down or stick out. The degree of projection is a matter of detail, but in principle they must do one or the other. There is no more reason why, having once learnt to stick out, they should return to dressing sheer down, than why we should all return to our ancestors' practice of painting the body with woad.

Photography, again, is a fashion that perhaps may last longer than all the nuisances it entails might lead one to expect. It certainly brings nuisances with it that may make the most patient man wish the sun had never been put to this horrible purpose. Sitting to a photographer is not quite so bad as going to a dentist, but it is something near it. In the first place, the leading photographers make appointments or grant a sitting as if they were high Government officials giving away clerks' places to troublesome but deserving people. Then the photographer himself is a trial. Probably he finds his sitters bores, and he would make a much less lucrative thing of it if he allowed the sitter and the sitter's friends to interfere. Still it is a nuisance for a lady to be carried off from her husband or other male person in charge, and be treated by a smirking fifth-rate artist for half an hour as something between a convict and a baby. In the case, more especially, of young girls, we must add that this system of separate sittings is something much worse than a nuisance, and ought to be resolutely put down. Then the

eminent photographer who thinks himself sure of his business is the most audacious of men. There is nothing he will not say to put down criticism and inquiry. A lady went lately to be taken with a little girl. The money was paid, and in about a week or ten days the thing was pronounced to be ready. The lady was all very well, and so was the upper part of the little girl's figure, but below the petticoat she shaded off into two faint wavy columns like the reflection of trees in water. Remonstrance was made, and the eminent photographer had the assurance to say that artists had now given up putting in legs. Then a quiet, unoffending man is sometimes overwhelmed with what seems to him the joke and mockery of the attitude in which, under the eminent photographer's directions, he is offered to his friends. A gentleman of a solid, humdrum appearance, with only that sort of romance about him which women cannot detect, was recently persuaded to sit. He sat, and the eminent photographer did his best. But it was a failure, and two or three more sittings came off in vain. At last the eminent photographer expressed himself much pleased. By the judicious introduction of a background, and a few objects being placed so as to break the stiffness, success had been achieved; and this is what the photograph presented. The unfortunate man was standing with his back to the Lago di Garda. He was placed on the top of a grand marble staircase, near a splendid balustrade. In one hand he held a very new borrowed silk umbrella, and he was supported on the other side by a friend's hat. It is bad enough to be depicted in this way, but the mere being depicted is a very small portion of the whole business. After the photographs are sent home comes the worry for them. There is some sort of pleasure in giving them to very near relatives and very dear friends. We all like to fancy that there are a chosen few who really care to have a likeness of us, although it does represent us bareheaded, and surveying a new hat on the banks of an Italian lake. But the demand for photographs is not limited to relations or friends. It is scarcely limited to acquaintances. Any one who has ever seen you, or has seen anybody that has seen you, or knows any one that says he has seen a person who thought he has seen you, considers himself entitled

to ask you for your photograph, and to make you pay eighteen-pence in order to comply with the demand. There is no compliment in it. The claimant does not care about you or your likeness in the least. But he or she has got a photograph book, and, as it must be filled, you are invited to act as padding to that volume, and to fill a vacant space between Prince Max of Hesse Darmstadt and the amiable owner's third brother, as he appears in the comic costume of a navvie. It is not even grown-up people only who ask in this preposterous way for photographs. Children and babies have got their photograph books, and say that really they must have your likeness. They protest they will not know what to do with their miserable young lives unless you consent to pay the eighteen-pence for them and figure in their collection. This is terrible. People who are not accustomed to them do not generally much care for infants in arms, but those precious darlings will rise in estimation now. They may have an awkward habit of bending suddenly in the back, as if they were made of soft leather, but at any rate they cannot possibly ask for your photograph.

We do not for a moment dream that the fashion of photograph collecting will die out. In the first place, the gain of having cheap portraits of friends is so great that there is a solid advantage in photographs which would counterbalance a great many nuisances of a very serious sort. And then the collections when made are very useful. They supply a fund of talk to people who have nothing to say. Every one can find something to remark about a collection of photographs. Either they do not know the people represented in it, or they do know them, or they wonder whether they know them. Then, if they know them, they can say they are like or unlike; or they can pay adroit compliments and make acceptable remarks on the photographs most cherished by the collector; or they can gratify a little quiet malice, and say that they never could have believed so very unfavorable a likeness is a true one, and yet every one knows the sun must be right. It is this fund of easy small-talk which will be the real foundation of the permanent success of photography as a fashion. It might easily have happened that photograph books would have shared the fate of albums. Thirty years ago, young ladies used to keep albums, and

people used to be decoyed or frightened into writing in them. Authors of all sizes and degrees of reputation were entreated to add their mite. Charles Lamb's letters, for example, are full of the references to the albums he had been writing in. But the weak point of albums was that, where they were not occupied by magnificent water-color representations of perfectly round roses in the fullest bloom, they were too intellectual. People in an ordinary drawing-room think there is a sort of plot to find them out if any demand is made on their intellect; and to write verses, or even to copy correctly a piece of poetry out of a standard author, is dangerous and embarrassing. It is true that writers in albums were occasionally allowed to get off by writing out in their best hand one of the very poorest and best-known riddles they could recollect, such as "Why is Athens like the wick of a candle?" but even this is precarious, for the answer has to be remembered and understood. In photographs all is plain sailing. All that has to be done is to make gossiping remarks about other people, and this is a duty to which the most timid intellects feel competent.

Photographs are, then, a fashion; but it is possible they may be what, considering the mutability of human things, deserves to be called a permanent fashion, because they tend to supply a want that will always be felt. It is the same with ladies' novels and other records of the inner life and language of young women. This species of composition is a fashion of the day. Half a century ago the dear creatures either had no self-inquiring, dreamy life-shadowings, or else they kept them locked up. Now printers can hardly print fast enough to keep pace with all the outpourings of lady novelists. The supply is like that of an Artesian well—it is perennial and ever-flowing. We venture to say that if any one offered a small prize for a tale of woman's feelings, there would be at least five thousand competitors. It is a fashion that we do not take much interest in; but we admit that it gives something that was wanted. Most women have a latent gush in them; and if the gush does not flow out in marriage, it gladly finds a vent in print. As long as there are single women with unrequited feelings, or married women who can make this sort of production pay, and as long as printing is cheap, so long will

the lady's novel last. Perhaps it will improve, but anyhow it will go on. There are other fashions, as to which it is more difficult to guess whether they will last or not. Morning calls, for example, seemed a deep-rooted habit of English society, and yet they are almost a thing of the past. Will sermons go too? We do not mean the discourses of a Christian minister who has something to say, and says it as and when he thinks it ought to be said. Such discourses will, we are sure, go on till the tongue of man ceases to be heard on earth. But will the ordinary half-hour cut and dry discourse, in which neither the preacher nor the congrega-

tion pretend to take the slightest interest, go on in England? Very likely it may; for it serves some objects, though not very high ones. And if it is objected that we cannot believe our posterity will always stand what does not please or profit them, the answer is, that we stand the sermon, and we stand being submerged under confluent waves of crinoline at dinner, and we stand audacious children squeezing out our photographs from us. And if we can stand all this, why should not others? There must be some burdens that are always borne, and some fashions that do not pass away.

RARE AUTOGRAPHS.—Messrs. Puttick and Simpson have just dispersed a collection of rare autographs. The following were amongst the most remarkable lots, with the prices they produced: A letter signed by Anne Boleyn, £11, 10s.—A letter of Pomponne de Bellièvre, who was sent, as ambassador from the French Court, to intercede with Elizabeth on behalf of Mary Queen of Scots, this letter having reference to that mission, £8.—Letter of Catherine of Aragon to the Emperor Charles V., written after her divorce, and appealing for sympathy and support, £26.—Letter signed by Catherine Parr, informing her brother of her marriage with Henry VIII., which had taken place but eight days before, £27. Letter signed by Edward VI., £13, 15s.—A letter of Handel, respecting some engagements for the King's Theatre, £13, 10s.—Receipt signed by Hogarth, £4.—A Fable in the hand of La Fontaine, £4.—A short letter of Martin Luther, £8.—A letter of Marat, the revolutionary Attorney-General, £5.—Two warrants signed by Mary I., £7, 7s., and £5, 10s.—A letter of Mary Queen of Scots, in which she refers to the religious distractions of the time, £22.—A letter of Philip Melancthon, £7.—A notarial document, signed by Molière, £15.—A letter of Racine, giving an account of the battle of Nerwinden, when the confederate army, under William III., was defeated, £6, 5s.—Two documents signed by Richard III.; the first as Duke of Gloucester, the second as King, £11, 10s., and £18.—Letters of the two brothers Robespierre, £8, 5s.—Letter of Madame Roland, £5.—A fine letter of Rubens, of antiquarian interest, £10, 15s.—The original deed of bargain and sale to Shakspeare of a house in Blackfriars, £71. It is the counterpart to this deed, bearing the autograph, which is possessed by the Guildhall Library.—A conveyance to the uses of Shakspeare's will, in which, amongst other curious facts in relation to the poet's family history, is recorded the name of the husband of Shakspeare's daughter, Judith. He appears to have been one Thomas Quiney, of Stratford, vintner, £36.—*Athenæum*.

A NEW FURNACE FOR BOILERS.—I desire to record a remarkable circumstance attending the supplying of furnaces with heated air, which has been hitherto unnoticed, or at least not made known;—it differs from the hot blast for smelting purposes. The heated air is obtained by keeping the ash-pit entirely closed, except when opened for removing ashes, and an arrangement for passing one or more streams of air from the back of a boiler bed, through separate passages in the solid brickwork, beneath the entire length of the lowest fire-flues, from thence into the ash-pit and through the bars into the furnace. The result derived from this description of furnaces, when applied to heating gas retort beds, may surprise your readers, who probably suppose it would occasion increased trouble with clinkers, the great object now being to check their forming by using evaporating pans in the ash-pit, which mode causes clinkers to become very hard, their removal often breaking the brickwork. Whereas, by thus totally reversing the usual mode, and drawing out the heat absorbed in the solid brickwork and that radiated from the floor of the furnace and repassing it through the bars, clinkers are formed of so soft a nature as to be clearable from the bars with a rake. In fact, with one exception, firemen attending on these furnaces have told me they would sooner have charge of two altered furnaces than one of the common kind. I believe, when this becomes known and tried, it will be generally appreciated.

—*Athenæum*. GEORGE WALCOTT, C.E.

MESSRS. DEAN AND SON have made for themselves quite an extensive trade in moveable toy books for the young—books which by an ingenious contrivance of pasteboard pictures can be set in motion, and produce endless excitement and amusement among the little ones. They have in hand a more wonderful one than any yet published, entitled "*Dean's New Book of Parlor Magic*."

From Chambers's Journal.

SCIENCE AND ARTS FOR FEBRUARY.

As the year advances, the great International Exhibition grows more and more into the proportions of a great fact. In clear weather, strollers in Hyde Park can see the domes of the vast building rising in the southern sky, and hear a multitudinous noise of hammers; and vehicles may be seen on the way to Brompton laden with elements of the forthcoming display. France, it is said, will outdo her former effort, and present such a spectacle of art and manufacture, taste and design, as will astonish all beholders. Among the contributions from our Australian colony of Victoria will be an obelisk, dead gilt, forty-two feet in height, and ten feet square at the base, intended to represent the eight hundred tons of gold raised within that colony in the ten years 1851-1861; a quantity worth £104,000,000 sterling. Among the objects of art there will appear the bronze statue of Wedgewood, which has been recently cast to be set up as a memorial of the eminent potter at Etruria in the Potteries, after the close of the Exhibition.

The Horticultural Society are striving to improve their opportunity, and have announced eight shows to be held during the season, at which two thousand guineas will be given away in prizes. The shows are to comprise not flowers merely, but useful things, cereals and edible roots, whereby it is hoped alimentary resources may be increased. There is talk of a further attraction in the shape of a visitation by foreign bands of military music, among whom, by permission of the Emperor of Austria, will appear the famous Wellington band from Vienna. The last part of the *Proceedings* of the Horticultural Society contains a report on one hundred and eighteen varieties of cucumbers grown in the garden at Chiswick in 1861. This large number will probably surprise most readers: it was, however, resolved by experiment into thirty-four sorts only which are fit for cultivation. The best of the non-glaucous sorts is Carter's Champion; and the best of the glaucous bears the name of Dr. Livingstone.

Dissatisfaction has been often expressed at the length of time which elapses between the reception of American news at Queens-town and the arrival of the telegrams in

London, especially as the news is current in Liverpool before it is known in the metropolis; and the consequence is, that a new telegraph line is to be established from Queenstown to London direct, crossing Ireland to Wexford, and thence by submarine cable to Milford Haven. The cable is to be of the kind manufactured by Messrs. Silver, coated with india-rubber, which, as experience proves, is a better insulator than gutta-percha. By the completion of this line, as we hear, American news will be known in London five hours earlier than at present.

The *Warrior* is now going to sea in earnest, and ere long it will be known how she has behaved in a voyage from England to the Mediterranean. Some such test as this was required before a conclusive opinion could be given as to her seaworthiness, or her steaming or sailing qualities. It is said that a change in the method of steering is essential for ships of such great length and weight, and that it will be found needful to place a rudder at the head as well as the stern. This method answers well in the long transport vessels recently introduced on the Indus and other rivers in India. There is some talk of doing the steering by one of Armstrong's hydraulic machines, which is perfectly under control, and being worked by cold water, involves no risk of explosion. Another proposition is to light the inside of the great ship with gas, and to make the electric light available for signals. The suggestion of these improvements shows that progress will be made in the building and fitting of what some future poet will describe as our iron walls. Papers on the subject have been read at the United Service Institution; and Mr. Samuda has brought a paper before the Institution of Civil Engineers, "On the Form and Materials for Iron-plated Ships."

As regards the materials for ship-building, there is something fresh to be said. We hear from the other side of the Atlantic of iron containing an alloy of manganese and zinc, which is so hard that no file will touch it; while here, at Sheffield, results have been arrived at in the manufacture of iron and steel, which a few years ago would have been thought incredible. Mr. Bessemer now casts an ingot of steel, which when hammered and rolled to the required length,

is converted into a railway bar, weighing eighty-four pounds to the yard, superior in quality to case-hardened or steel-faced bars. These latter are liable to crack and laminate, but the homogeneous steel, as Mr. Bessemer's metal is called, is tough and ductile, and has a tensile strength of forty tons to the square inch. It is the opinion of practical men, that all the railways in the kingdom will, in course of years, be relaid with steel rails. A beginning has been made on some lines at stations and places where the wear is greatest; and the steel rails, after nearly a year of service, are found to be scarcely inferior to new. Ordinary rails and points, in similar circumstances, require renewing four times a year. The places referred to are the Pimlico station, some parts of the London and North-Western, and of the Caledonian Railway. This exceedingly durable metal will no doubt be properly considered in the new course of experiments on the strongest material for ships' sides about to be instituted; and it ought not to be lost sight of in discussions on the means of lessening the risk of railway travelling. The Society of Arts have given an evening to the consideration of railway management, as looked at from the passengers' point of view; and *The Quarterly*, in a long article, has helped to keep the question aloft.

Among the operations carried on at Sheffield, Mr. Bessemer has shown that the manufacture of great guns is a comparatively quick process. He filled his "converting vessel" with melted pig-iron at 11.20 in the forenoon; in thirty minutes, it was converted into fluid steel, and cast in an iron mould four feet long, and sixteen inches square, from which it was taken and forged while still hot; and at seven o'clock in the evening the gun was shaped, and ready for the boring-mill.

It appears that cast-steel bells are growing more and more into use. In Russia and Canada, where the winters are intensely cold, cast-steel bells are preferred for churches and public buildings, as they do not crack when struck, even with the temperature below zero; a degree of cold which is often fatal to ordinary bells.

What Mr. Bessemer has done for iron, Mr. Ransome of Ipswich has done for stone. His experiments and method of preserving

building-stone have been for some time before the public; he has now gone a step further, and has succeeded in manufacturing an indestructible stone from a mixture of sand, chalk, and other substances moistened with silicate of potash. The claylike substance thus produced is formed into bricks or slabs; these are washed over with a solution of chloride of calcium, and the operation is complete. No baking or drying is necessary; the bricks and slabs harden to the utmost degree, and without warping or twisting. So, if a thin coat be spread on any exposed surface with a trowel, and similarly treated, it hardens in the same way. Dr. Frankland, F.R.S., a first-rate authority, states that Mr. Ransome's stone is harder and more durable than any building-stone now used, except some of the granites and primary rocks.

Dr. M'Vicar has written a paper to show that geometrical laws may be applied to biological science as well as to astronomy; and to illustrate his argument he brings forward the various forms assumed by animals during hybernation, the forms in which animal and vegetable organisms are developed and matured, and shows how widely the spherical form prevails. The sphere exposes the smallest number of its parts to external influences, and secludes and protects within itself the largest number. Animals, during sleep and hybernation, assume an approximation to a spherical form; hence, from these and other phenomena, the doctor considers that he demonstrates his argument, and the value and applicability of geometry in the science of life.

The important paleontological question which has been much discussed of late by naturalists is now attracting attention in the far north. Professor Karl von Baer, member of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, has laid a paper before that learned body, on the extinction of animal species from the physiological and non-physiological point of view, and particularly on the disappearance of species contemporary with man. Those who have paid attention to this important subject will be able to form some notion of the significance of the professor's proposition. Another paper by the same hand is on a new project for the establishment of oyster-beds on the Russian shores of the Baltic, from which we gather

that Russia is about to imitate the good work which has been so successfully begun in England and France in the acclimatization and multiplication of fish.

M. Struve, the Russian astronomer-royal, declares that the great arc of the meridian measured in Russia will have to be remeasured before its exactitude will satisfy the requirements of modern science, because, during the measuring, no allowance was made for the disturbing effects of mountain masses on the instruments employed. This disturbing effect was hardly considered until a few years ago, when Archdeacon Pratt of Calcutta investigated it, and communicated the results to the Royal Society in elaborate papers which have been published in the *Philosophical Transactions*. We also hear that the Indian arc, surveyed by Colonel Lambton, will have to be remeasured, with instruments of the present day, which are better fitted for the work than were those manufactured half a century ago. Sir Andrew Waugh's Report on the latest operations in India has just been published as a blue-book; in looking through it, we notice a particular concerning cost which is worth attention. The surveying of the mountain regions of the Himalaya was accomplished at a cost of eight shillings a square mile; a sum remarkably insignificant when the danger and difficulty of the work are taken into consideration. Astronomy will ere long make a further advance in India, for the

parliamentary grant of £1000 to the Astronomical Society, is to be expended in establishing a hill observatory near Poonah.

The Swedish exploring expedition to Spitzbergen has confirmed the observations of Sir John Ross and Sir Leopold M'Clinck, that animal life is to be found in the polar sea at a depth of twelve hundred and fifty fathoms. The old maps and charts of the latitudes explored, which proved very erroneous, have been rectified; and proofs were found that the Gulf-stream actually touches upon that far northern island.—At last Australia has been crossed from south to north; after the sacrifice of many daring adventurers, a small party of four, led by Mr. Burke, travelled all the way from Melbourne to the sea in the Gulf of Carpentaria. But the tale of their enterprise ends sadly. They found a country of grass, wood, and water, and proved that the interior desert or swamp so long assigned to the unexplored inner regions of Australia, has no existence; they showed a practicable way from sea to sea, and returned to the rendezvous to perish of starvation. The mismanagement or neglect which led to the catastrophe remind us painfully of the terrible disappointment that awaited Captain Franklin and his few miserable companions on their arrival at Fort Confidence from their dreary walk across the Barrens from the Coppermine River.

UNSUCCESSFUL PRIZE POEMS.—Such fragments as that quoted by F. J. M. (which I suppose may be called maccaronic) are usually given as if parts of unsuccessful prize poems. The following are three that I have heard thus quoted; perhaps some reader of "N. & Q." may remember others:—

1. Part of a poem on Nebuchadnezzar—

"And murmured, as he cropped the unwonted food,
'It may be wholesome, but it isn't good.'"

2. On "Belshazzar's Feast"—

"When all the nobles stood appalled,
Some one suggested Daniel should be called;
Daniel appears, and just remarks in passing,
The words are Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Uphar-sin."

3. On the discovery of the Sandwich Isles. The discoverer is wrecked on an island—then

"They brought him slices thin of ham and tongue,
With bread that from the trees spontaneous hung:

Pleased with the thought the gallant captain smiles,

And aptly names the place the Sandwich Isles."

—Notes and Queries.

G.

MR. EDWARD DICEY will commence his papers on the United States in the April number of *Macmillan's Magazine*, with an article entitled "Three Weeks in New York."